Tanner A 434

Briefe discourse of certaine points of the *religion, which is among the* common sort of Christians, *which may be termed the Countrie Diumitie.*

With a manifest confuta*tion of the same, after the* order of a Dialogue.

Compiled by *George Gifforde.*

138

Imprinted at London, by Richard Field, and Felix Kingston.

1598.

Thom. Tanner

BB

BIBLIOTHECA BODLEIANA

TO THE RIGHT HONORABLE HIS VERY GOOD LORD, AMBROSE EARLE OF WARWICKE, *Maister of her Maiesties Ordinance*, Knight of the noble order of the Garter, and one of her Highnesse most honorable priuie Counsell.

GEORGE GIFFORD *wisheth increase of all true happinesse and honour, with the continuall comfort of a good conscience.*

IN Nothing doubt (right Honorable) but that it will seeme great rashnesse vnto some, and no small folly, to offer and present so simple and slender a booke as this is, vnto your Lordship: for what doth it seeme to bring with it worthie the person of a Nobleman? There is no pompe in the maner of speech, for it is rude & countrey like: the matter it selfe is not handled as a disputation betweene deepe Diuines, but after the maner of ploughmen and carters: a great absurditie therefore appeareth in this, that an honorable person of great dignity should be called for, as it were to stand by and heare such speak. Good cause there is therfore that I should render some reason of this my boldnesse, which I will willingly do; to vse that which the heathen Poet saith

Si canimus syluas, syluæ sunt consule dignæ,

will not suffice: for although respecting the things which I handle, because they belong to the trees that are planted in the Lordes Orchard, they doe as farre excell the

woods and groues, as the vine doth the bramble buſh, yet neuertheleſſe he hath ſo richly decked his baſe and beggerly matter, he hath ſo clothed it in ſilkes from top to toe, and hath hanged ſo many iewels vpon it, that it ſhall find entertainment, and be thought meete for the courts of Princes, whereas mine being verie poorely clad, will be reiected. I will expreſſe therfore a better reaſon of my doing, which is this. As thoſe which haue corne fields, thinke it not a thing vnmeete to be told by their ſeruants of thiſtles and weeds, which would hinder and marre the corne, if they prouide not to haue them plucked vp: euē ſo I know that it is not an vnworthy thing, to ſhew vnto thoſe which are of high calling, the hurtfull and dangerous weedes which would ouergrow and choke the heauenly ſeede of the Goſpell, ſowen in the Lordes field. When as our Church therefore & common wealth, being the Lordes husbandrie, is ouergrowen with weedes, and almoſt layd waſt, I ſee no cauſe wherfore I may iuſtly be blamed, for giuing notice thereof in ſome part vnto your honour. Seeing the principall cauſes, and fountaines from whence corruptions flow, are to be taken away and dried vp, by thoſe whom God hath placed in the higheſt roomes; Among which, the want of a ſincere miniſterie of the word is the greateſt: through abſence of which, there is a flood of ignorance and darkneſſe, ouerflowing the moſt part of the land: the feare of God is baniſhed from the greateſt part: the wonderfull heapes and piles of ſinne, which ſhould be waſhed and cleanſed away by the word, do vndoubtedly with one voyce cry alowd in the eares of the Lord, for vengeance vpon the whole realme. The Papiſtes cannot be conuerted, but hardned and turned out of the way, there is ſo foule diſorder, and ſo many ſtumbling blockes caſt in the way. The Deuill hath elbow roome to ſpread abroad, to plant and water all kinde of errours, ſo few there be to withſtand him. But to come to that particular which I handle in this Treatiſe: there are the moſt in number,

who

who hauing Poperie taken from them, and not taught throughly and sufficiently in the Gospell, doe stand as men indifferent; so that they may quietly enioy the world, they care not what religion come: they are like naked men, fit and ready for any coate almost that may be put vpon them. The life of these is exceeding prophane, they haue hardned themselues in their sinnes, by reason which they gather partly out of their own braine, and partly out of some sayinges in the word, by which they cloake and defend their owne corrupt wayes. I haue therefore gathered the most common principles of their faith and religion, by which they arme themselues, against true repentance, & right vnderstanding: I haue not noted all, neither haue I medled with those seuerall grosse absurdities, which each hath proper to himselfe, for that should be infinite. I trust your Lordship will rightly construe my good meaning, and take in good worth this simple Treatise: pitying the case of the poore Church of Christ, which is so full of grieuous sicknesses and sores, that vnlesse she be relieued and cured, she will scarce be able to continue life. She cannot but most humbly craue this dutie at the handes of those which are neare about her deare nurse: from whom she hath now long time receiued wonderfull protection and defence against aduersaries, that they make knowne her state, & labour the recouery and retaining of her health. because it doth stand not onely with their eternall glorie in the world to come, but also with their honourable estate in this life. Which cannot be established to florish in continuance, vnlesse the Lord God haue his throne so erected in the middest of her, that she may florish. For where he is dishonored and despised of those whom she nourisheth in her bosome, her case is daungerous, for it is against all wise pollicie, to make him an aduersarie who hath all power, & of himselfe is able to roote out and destroy mighty kingdomes: so that if she keepe in fauour & league with him, there is no feare of any other.

This Lord of Lords, and most mightie king, increase abundantly in you all heauenly and spirituall graces, with increase of honour in this world, to his glorie and your eternall comfort. Amen.

Your Honours most humble to command,

GEORGE GIFFORD.

A briefe discourse of certaine pointes of the religion which is a-*mong the common sort of Christians: which* may be termed the Countrey diuinity: with *a plaine and manifest confutation of* the same, after the order of a Dialogue.

Zelotes. *Atheos.*

Zelotes.

WEll ouertaken my friend.

Atheos. I thanke you Sir.

Zelot. How farre do ye trauell this way?

Ath. Twentie myles.

Zelot. Do you dwell in Essex?

Ath. Yea, not farre from Chelmesord.

Zelot. What cal ye the town where ye dwel?

Ath. G. B.

Zelot. Haue ye a Preacher there?

Ath. We haue an honest man our Curat.

Zelot. Doth he teach his flocke?

Ath. Ye doth his good will, and more yee cannot require of a man.

Zelot. Ye did commend him euen now, to be an honest man.

Ath. Commend him? yea I may commend him: I am perswaded we haue the best Priest in this country, we would be loth to forgo him for the learnedest of them all.

Zelot. I pray ye let me heare what his vertues be, for which ye do cõmend him so highly.

Ath. Ye is as gentle a person as euer I see: a very good fellow, he wil not sticke when good fellowes and honest men mete together, to spend his groate at the alehouse: I cannot tell, they preach and preach, but he doth liue as wel as the best of them all. I am afrayd when he is gone, we shall neuer haue the like againe.

Zelot. Be these the great vertues which ye do commend him for? he may haue all these, & yet be more meete for to keepe swine, then to be a shepheard ouer the flocke of Christ: is he able to teach the people, and doth he instruct them in Gods word?

Ath. I know not what teaching ye would haue, he doth reade the Seruice as well as any of them all, and I thinke there is as good edifying in those prayers and Homelies, as in any that the Preacher can make: let vs learne those first.

Zelot. That is not all which is required in a Minister, for a boy of ten yeares old can doe all this: doth hee not teach them to know the will of God, and reproue naughtinesse among the people?

Ath. Yes that hee doth, for if there be any that doe not agree, hee will seeke for to make them friendes: for hee will get them to play a game or two at bowles or cardes, and to drinke together at the alehouse: I thinke it a

godly

godly way, to make charitie: hee is none of these busie controllers: for if he were, he could not bee so well liked of some (and those not of the meanest) as he is.

Zelot. Doe ye call the Preachers of Gods word busie controllers? doe they go further then Gods word doth leade them?

Ath. We may call them busie controllers, I thinke we shall doe nothing shortly, as poore a man as I am, I would not for fortie shillings that we had one of them, there bee more of my minde.

Zelot. Some poore men perhaps.

Ath. Nay, the best in the Parish, who would not so well like of our Curat, if hee should meddle that way.

Zelot. I perceiue now what maner of man your Curat is, & I see, like maister like scholer.

Ath. Why so I pray ye?

Zelot. Why so, I smell how vnmeete he is, and also how ignorant you are. Let me question a litle while with ye cõcerning that which ye haue vttered.

Ath. I trust I haue vttered nothing but that which doth become an honest man.

Zelot. Nay, all your speech doeth bewray that you are a carnall man, for you haue made a verie fine description of a good Curate: what meane ye when ye say, hee is a good fellow, and will not sticke to spend his money among good fellowes, is it not because he is a

pot companion?

Ath. Do ye mislike good felowship, is it not lawfull for honest men to drinke & be merrie together?

Zelot. I do not mislike true friendship, which is in the Lord, knit in true godlines, but I mislike this vice, which ouerfloweth euery where, that drunkards meet together and sit quaffing, and the minister which should reproue them, to be one of the chiefe: when hee should be at his study, to be vpon the ale-bench at cardes or dice.

Ath. I perceiue you are one of those curious and precise fellowes, which will allow no recreation: what would ye haue men doe? we shall do nothing shortly. You would haue thē sit moping alwayes at their bookes, I like not that.

Zelot. Nay my friend, I do not allow that recreation, which prophane men call so, which is no recreation, but a torment to a godly minde, to see men drunken, to heare them sweare and rayle, to spend their goodes and their time so leudly; and hee that should teach them, to be a ringleader: as there be many as it seemeth, which are entred into the ministerie, for none other purpose, but to liue an idle life, to haue leysure to play at cardes, or tables, and bowles all the weeke; and therfore they haue no skill to teach: but like vnsauerie salt, are not good euen for the dunghill.

Ath.

Ath. These things were vsed before you were borne, and will be when you are gone, so long as men thinke no hurt when they play and be merrie.

Zelot. I perceiue ye are of the right stampe, ye are light vpon an argument, which may wel be termed old Suresbee, because it bringeth a reason which doth sticke by many, when all other reasons forsake them. But let vs pull this old fellow out of his new coat, and ye shall see what a leane shrimpe he is, and so feeble, that he cannot go on stilts. These things were vsed say you, before you were borne, so were all other naughtie vices; are they now good because they be old? because men committed them before I was borne, and will do when I am dead?

Ath. I meane not so, but there were as wise men, and wiser then be now among our forefathers: and they would not haue vsed nor allowed such things, if they had not bene good: they knew well inough what they did. Let not vs be more precise then they were.

Zelot. I perceiue you ground your faith & your doings vpō men, & not vpon Gods word.

Ath. I pray God I may follow our forefathers, & do no worse thē they did: what should we seeke for to be wiser or better then they? I would we could do but as well as they did.

Zelot. Do you not thinke that there were among our forefathers, theeues, murtherers, adulterers, drunkards, and such like?

Ath. I thinke there haue bene alwayes euill doers, and wilbe till the worldes end.

Zelot. Would ye haue vs to follow those, and to take their vices?

Ath. We are not to follow any thing but that which is good: and those which were godly and wise.

Zelot. Is there any thing good, but that which God setteth downe in his word? & were any wise and godly, but such as did follow the will of God expressed in his word?

Ath. There is nothing good but of God, and such as do as he commaundeth.

Zelot. Then you see old suresbee layd flat vpon the ground, and your lustie champion is manifested to bee but skinne and bones, and the same halfe rotten: for now by your owne confession doeth follow, that the word of God is the onelie rule, and we must follow our forefathers no further then they follow the word of God. You must not follow Dauid nor Abraham in euery thing they did. Furthermore also these naughtie vices and corrupt customes came from the wicked forefathers, & not from the godly, which followed Gods word.

Ath. That is true, but I will follow our forefathers: now there is no loue, then they liued in friendship, and made merrie together: now there is no good neighbourhood: now euery man for himselfe, and are ready to pull one another by the throate.

Zelot.

Zelot. There are but a few of your minde in this thing, are there?

Ath. Yes the greatest part: for I know almost none, but they will affirme this matter.

Zelot. If the greatest part be of your mind, wherfore is there not then a great deale of loue & friendship, where you say there is none? why doe ye not being the most in number, repaire the ruines of that old faithfull friendship, which ye say is decayed? Ye say that there was loue and friendship, and ye seeme to lament the want of them, and yet there is none in your selues: for ye be verie full of malice and strife. Is there any buzzard so blind, but that he may espie your grosse follie and vanitie in this point, when with open mouth, ye cry for loue, loue, & be the greatest enemies thereunto your selues? Moreouer, ye follow your owne fond and doating opinion, that ye imagine a thing which neuer was, for the world hath euer bin like it selfe, full of debate and strife, a very few in all ages which haue had true loue. Againe, you call none loue, but that carnall loue, which is in eating & drinking and other foolish delights. That which is the true loue, you condemne to be hatred: For if a man admonish & reproue you for any naughtie vice, which is the greatest loue: by and by ye stampe & stare like mad men, & say, now there is no loue: except a man do flatter ye, & be partaker of your foule and beastly sinnes, ye are at deadly hatred with him. But let vs return again

to Sir Robert, ye sayd he was as good a liuer as the best of them all.

Ath. I say so still, for he is content with his liuing: many of your spirituall men are neuer satisfied: for with that poore liuing he hath, he doth kéepe a good house, and doth féede the poore.

Zelot. You proue him to be a good liuer, by comparing him with those which are worse: It is all one as if a mã would proue a theefe which hath stolen twentie pound to be a good theefe, because hee is not so euill as he which hath stolen a thousand pounds.

Ath. Ye doe not well to compare true men with théeues.

Zelot. Is not he a theefe which doth take the hire, & doth not that which he should do for it?

Ath. Ye is as good as a théefe, I thinke so.

Zelot. Do not they rob then which take the liuing and do not feede the flocke? Let me aske ye a question, if a man rob and steale, and then keepe a good house, and feast his neighbours with it, and be a murtherer, wil his good housekeeping make him a good liuer?

Ath. No that it will not.

Zelot. Let me aske ye another questiõ: Which is the worse murtherer, he which doth murther the body, or he which doth murther the soule?

Ath. Ye which doth murther the soule.

Zelot. Then hee which should feede mens bodies, committed vnto him, & doth pine them to death, is a murtherer: and he which should

feede

feede mens ſoules, and doth ſterue them. is a greater murtherer: and ſo his good houſe keeping cannot make him a good man, robbing ſo many, and killing ſo many.

Ath. I will not beléeue that hee doth kill any.

Zelot. That is becauſe ye will not beleeue the ſaying of Chriſt: If the blind lead the blind they both fall into the ditch; nor that God will ſaue men by the word preached.

Ath. I hope we be not blind, I truſt we beléeue all well.

Zelot. You are blind, & ſhould haue a guide to lead ye the way to heauen, and to inſtruct ye in true godlineſſe.

Ath. I will not learne the way to heauen of any man, for I hope I haue as good a faith, and as good a ſoule Godward as the beſt learned of them all.

Zelot. Whereby do you trie your goodneſſe & your faith, any other way then by your own blind fantaſie?

Ath. I meane well: I hurt no man: nor I thinke no man any hurt: I loue God aboue all: & put my whole truſt in him: what would ye haue more? they preach and teach, they can tell vs no more but this, when they haue all ſayd what they can.

Zelot. Now ye tumble it vp together indeede: I ſee well it is no ſmall trouble to bring an ignorant man to ſee his follie.

Ath. I haue vttered my conscience: if I say not well, I am ready for to learne.

Zelot. What neede you learne, when you know all aforehād, euen as much as all the preachers can tell ye?

Ath. Ye take me at the worst, the wisest of vs all may learne.

Zelot. You said, that ye loue God aboue all, and you thinke no man no hurt: I take it your meaning is, that ye do loue God with all your hart, and your neighbour as your selfe, & more then this cannot be taught.

Ath. We should doe this, if we doe it not, God forgiue vs.

Zelot. This is all, is it not, what needeth any more teaching?

Ath. Let men do this first, and afterward, if they will learne more, let them.

Zelot. Ye giue verie graue aduise now, if there were any to follow it.

Ath. I haue no learning, but I thinke if men would doe this, it would not be so euill as it is.

Zelot. If euery thing which is spoken truely, be spoken wisely, then you haue vttered a verie wise saying, for I am sure there cannot be a truer. I beleeue indeede ye haue no learning, and I am sure as you say, if men should do that, there would not be so much euill among vs.

Ath. Ye thinke peraduenture that I speake like a fole: I would I were as wise as those which

which I heare say so.

Zelot. Haue ye many of these great wise men, which would haue men first fulfill the ten Commaundements and then run to heare Sermons?

Ath. All things are well spoken which are well take: if they be not wise I pray God make them wise: I haue nought to do with them.

Zelot. Ye are a plaine man, and haue skill in outward things, will ye giue me leaue to aske you a question in a matter wherein ye haue vnderstanding?

Ath. I thanke God I dare answer to a question.

Zelot. Are ye a carpenter or a mason?

Ath. I haue no skill that way.

Zelot. Then if there be a great house of tymber and stone to build, you cannot build it.

Ath. If there were no better builders then I, there would not be so many gay houses.

Zelot. If one should say here is a very fayre house to be builded, it is no more but to lay a good foundation; to raise vp the wals and to finish the roofe, you know this all: therefore ye can build it, for ye know all.

Ath. I know this is all: but I can do neuer a whit of it, vnlesse a carpenter or a builder do teach me.

Zelot. Ye say well, euen so to loue God with all our heart, with all our mind, & our neighbor as our selfe, is all, but we know not how to doe

one iot of it, vnleſſe we be taught it out of Gods word.

Ath. God graunt we may, for there be ouer many which do not regard it.

Zelot. Let me now aske you further, put caſe one ſhould ſay vnto you, thus, you know all that is to be done in building an houſe: the foundation, the walles, and the roofe, doe theſe firſt, if ye will learne any more, ye may go to ſome carpenter.

Ath. There is no man ſo fooliſh, to giue a man that counſell.

Zelot. It is the counſell you gaue, & the wiſe men which ye ſpake of, which would haue mē firſt to do and afterward to learne.

Ath. Nay, to doe that they know, and afterward to learne more: for there was neuer more knowledge and leſſe doing.

Zelot. It is a verie pitifull caſe to ſee, how the world is blinded, ye bring not this out of your owne bouget: for there be very many wiſe and iolly heades, which ſtand much vppon this which you ſpeake: they neuer vnderſtood that which Solomon ſaith, Prouerb. 1. cap. 22. verſ. Ye fooles bee enemies vnto knowledge, or hate knowledge. Neither do they know that which Saint Paule ſpeaketh 1. Corinth. 8. verſ. 2. If any man thinke he knoweth any thing, he knoweth nothing as yet, as hee ought to knowe. They neuer conſidered what the holie Ghoſt ſaith in the latter ende of the fifth Chapter to

the

the Hebrewes and twelfth verſe, where he doth ſharply reproue them, becauſe they were children in vnderſtanding. Neither do they know that all well doing proceedeth from faith, and faith doth increaſe through knowledge: it grieueth me to ſtand vpon the matter, the ſaying is ſo buzzardly.

Ath. You would haue all men diuines, I thinke it is not for ploughmen to meddle with the Scriptures.

Zelot. You thinke ſo, but I pray you to whō ſpeaketh the Lord by the Prophet Eſay, when he ſaith: My people periſh for want of knowledge. Vnto whom ſpeaketh the Lord by the Prophet Hoſeas. chap. 4. 1. 2. when he ſaith: there is no truth, there is no mercy, nor knowledge of God in the land, but ſwearing, lying, killing, theeuing, committing adulterie, &c. Vnto whō wrote S. Paule, ſaying: Brethren bee children in malice, bee not children in vnderſtanding: and vnto whom wrote S. Peter exhorting ſo much vnto knowledge?

Ath. I thinke knowledge doth make men the worſe, for there be no worſe men thē many that be great Scripture men: none will deceiue a man ſoner then they: they will ſpeake a man faire before his face, and be ready behind his backe for to cut his throat.

Zelot It ſeemeth that you are no ſmall man, there is a great deale of good ſtuffe in you if you would vtter it.

Ash. I tell ye my minde plainly, I will not flatter any man.

Zelot. Ye neede not tell me that, I know what maner of man ye be. Let vs come to your last wordes, ye did speake verie leudly, do ye thinke that knowledge doth make men worse?

Ash. I heare many say so: if I speake leudly, there be a number mo beside me that do so.

Zelot. If knowledge make men the worse, then is it a thing that is not good of it selfe, for that which is good can not make a man euill: is there any beast which will say, that to know God or the will of God which is most holy and pure, can make a man the worse? No, these men are more then beasts. Againe, the more a man knoweth of God, the worse he should be; a very filthie blasphemie. Moreouer you are greatly deceiued, when ye thinke that all those which can talke of the Scriptures haue knowledge, for there bee verie many carnall pratlers, which seeme for to know much, and yet are as blind as buzzardes: these are naughtie men, not because they haue knowledge, but because they want knowledge.

Ash. I cannot tell, a man shall heare them say a great deale out of the Bible.

Zelot. No doubt a great deale more then they vnderstand: now when such doe not liue well, doth it follow that Gods word maketh them worse? nay ye bee all blind Asses which cannot see, that because there is verie litle true vnder-

vnderstãding of Gods word among men, therfore there is so much vncleanesse: For as the holy Ghost saith Psal. 119.9. Wherewithall shall a young man clense his way? euen by taking heed thereto according to thy word. Now whe men doe not vnderstand the word, how shall they take heede to their wayes, for to guide them by the same? And when God saith, the word doth cleanse vs, his meaning must needes be, that all such as are not purged thereby, are foule and filthie in his eyes.

Ath. Ye haue of your preachers, trim pulpit men, and can say very well, but their deeds are as euill as other mens, for who is more couetous then they: they are neuer content vntill they haue heaped liuing vpon liuing.

Zelot. Such skilfull men as you, thinke if a man can preach, or rather (as a number doe) prattle, and haue a rolling toung, & can make some shew of learning, that by and by he is a trim man, and hath great knowledge: when as indeed he hath no true knowledge. For I count him to haue true knowledge, which hath so learned Christ, that he is become a newe creature. Therefore Saint Iohn in the 2. Chapter 5. 6. verses, of his first Epistle speaking of Christ, saith: That he was made manifest to take away our sinnes, and in him is no sinne: Whosoeuer abideth in him sinneth not. Whosoeuer sinneth hath not seene him nor knowne him. Likewise in the first booke of Samuel, Chap. 2.

verſ.12. It is ſayd by the ſonnes of Ely, that they were the ſonnes of Beliall, and knew not God: and yet they were inſtructed in the law, and taught the people. And for mine owne part I could neuer perceiue that any wicked man could preach worth a button: I meane concerning, the chiefe thing required in preaching, which is the declaratiõ of the power of the ſpirite, which ought for to appeare, to the conuerſion of ſinfull men. For to lay open pointes of doctrine, they may do it well.

Ath. **It is not for vs that are ſimple men for to iudge who doth well, and who doth not.**

Zelot. Yes that it is, for Saint Iohn ſaith; trie the ſpirites whether they be of God: Our Sauiour Chriſt ſayth, my ſheepe heare my voyce, a ſtranger they will not heare. Wherepon it doth follow that he which knoweth not when pure doctrine and wholeſome is vttered, is not as yet among the number of the ſheepe of Chriſt. For if he were indued with the ſpirite of God, he ſhould by the ſame ſpirit feele when wholſome doctrine is deliuered vnto him.

Ath. **If a man be learned, then he ſhall be able to iudge what is ſayd rightly: otherwiſe he cannot tell.**

Zelot. It is not learning alone which muſt iudge of ſound preaching, for there be manie learned men which can not iudge well, as alſo there be many vnlearned, which are verie well able to diſcerne: all lieth in this point, the do-

 ctrine

ctrine is of God and not of men, and therefore thoſe do feele it & iudge rightly, whether they be learned or vnlearned, whom God doth inwardly teach with his ſpirite: for this cauſe S. Paule, 1. Cor. 14. doth ſhewe, that the word of God is ſo to be layd open in the congregation, that if there come in a man vnlearned or an infidell, he may be reproued and iudged, and the ſecretes of his heart made manifeſt. For if the word be not preached vnto the conſciences of men, it goeth away like a dead ſound. But we go into many matters, I haue not forgotten your former words: but perhaps ye would be loth to come to that againe.

Ath. I am not aſhamed of any thing which I ſaid, and I hope I nede not.

Zelot. No, your wares are ſo fine, ye need not care who view them, you loue God aboue all and with all your heart.

Ath. That I do, or elſe I were a beaſt, I would he were hanged which doth not that.

Zelot. Ye loue your neighbour as your ſelf?

Ath. If I do not I pray God forgiue me, I am ſure no man can accuſe me.

Zelot. Then you looke by this meanes to come to heauen?

Ath. I hope if there bee but three in all this countrey go to heauen, I ſhalbe one of them, I meane ſo well.

Zelot. Ye knowe the commaundements of God, and fulfill them alſo, do you not?

Ath. I thanke God I know them: and will fulfil them as nigh as God shal giue me grace.

Zelot. Do you breake none of them?

Ath. We breake them all of vs dayly and hourely: for there is no man which can keepe them all.

Zelot. You breake some of them, and keepe other some. Ye keepe the greatest, do you not? and breake the least?

Ath. I keepe the greatest, and therefore I hope God will beare with me in the rest.

Zelot. Which do ye take for to be the greatest, that ye are so cleare in?

Ath. I am no thiefe, nor murtherer, nor traitor: I pay euery man his owne: I thinke this is Gods bidding.

Zelot. Are there no greater then these?

Ath. I take him for an honest man which doth keepe these, & he that doth not I defie him.

Zelot. Euen so will I take you to be when I know that you do keepe them: But I maruell ye are so bold for to bid defiance to so many.

Ath. Do not you defie them all? & all other euill doers?

Zelot. If I should do so, you and I should be together by the eares by and by.

Ath. Then belike ye count me to be such a one: ye ought not to iudge.

Zel. A man may know the tree by the fruits: but let this passe: I pray ye tel me, is not he that hath moe Gods then one, as euil as a murtherer?

Ath.

Ath. I take him to be woꝛse.

Zelot. Then the first commaundement is greater, then those which you named?

Ath. If a man thinke there is any God but one, he is verie farre wide.

Zel. You haue none other Gods but one then?

Ath. It were pitie of my life if I should not be of that beliefe. If all ꝑ cõmandements were as easie to be kept as this, we should do well.

Zelot. Then ye neuer brake the first Commaundement.

Ath. Neuer in all my life: neither shall euer any make me to be but of Gods beliefe; foꝛ they which beleeue there be many Gods, are not of a right mind.

Zelot. Can you then keepe the greater and not the lesse? I doe not doubt but if a man can keepe the first he can keepe all, for the first is as hard as any of the rest, although such skilfull clerkes as you, count it to be verie easie.

Ath. Then it were an easie matter to kéepe them.

Zelot. What if I proue vnto you that you breake it, will you confesse your follie?

Ath. I will neuer be made beléeue that which I know is contrary.

Zelot. Let me aske ye this question: whether that man doeth keepe this Commaundement, which thinketh there is but one God, and yet giueth that honour and worship vnto other things, which he should giue vnto him alone?

Ath. I did neuer put any truſt in images, nor I neuer thought they could do me any good.

Zelot. I doe not ſpeake of that outward giuing away of Gods worſhip: but of another, which is inward in the mind.

Ath. I haue alwayes had God in my mind, and I truſt I haue neuer worſhipped ante beſides him.

Zelot. Is not that a mans God, which he loueth beſt, and which he doth moſt delight in?

Ath. Loke what a man loueth beſt, and taketh moſt delight in, I thinke he maketh that his God, becauſe we ought to loue God beſt.

Zelot. Do yee not thinke, that the thing which a man moſt ſetteth his minde vpon, and moſt ſeekes after, is that which he moſt loueth?

Ath. I ſuppoſe euery man loketh after that which he moſt loueth.

Zelot. Then hee which ſeeketh the world more then God, loueth the world more then God: and therefore in verie deede maketh the world his God.

Ath. God forbid that any man ſhould make more account of this world thē of God, I hope few do ſo.

Zelot. You hope few do ſo, but a man may eaſily proue that you do ſo, and I am ſure the moſt do ſo.

Ath. I truſt ye ſhal hardly proue it by me, although ye iudge ſo euill of me.

Zelot. Can a man ſeeke after God, or ſet his delight

delight vpon God anie other way, then by seeking after the knowledge & obedience of Gods will, which he hath reuealed in his word? or can a man loue God, and not loue his word?

Ath. **Gods word is good, we must loue that all of vs, and be ruled by it. for it doth tell vs nothing but that which is good.**

Zelot. How slily you winde out of the matter: I aske one thing which ye doe not answer, and that is, whether a man can seeke God, and not seeke him in his word?

Ath. **Euerie man cannot be a Diuine, we that be vnlearned men are not for to meddle with so high matters.**

Zelot. Now ye speake in your kind; We be vnlearned men, wee haue nought to doe with God, we may not meddle with him.

Ath. **You take all things wrong, ye do not heare me say so.**

Zelot. Do I take you wrong, do ye not say so? tell me, is not God as high a matter as his word?

Ath. **God is aboue all.**

Zelot. Can we haue to do with God, to serue him in anie way but by his word?

Ath. **The word of God doth tell vs what we are to do.**

Zelot. Then it followeth, when ye say we may not meddle with so high matters, that ye were euen as good for to say, we haue nought to do with God: we owe him no dutie of obe-

dience. we need not care to know his will: because he is as high a matter as his word.

Ath. You put in a great deale more then I said, and take me still at the worst.

Zelot. Nay you are so deepe in your speech, that ye vtter more in a word, then a man can well lay open in an houres talke. Againe, I take ye are not at the worst, for make the best of it you can, and it must needes follow, that those which care not for the word of God, care not for him; neither do they delight in him or loue him, which doe not delight in nor loue his word. Moreouer how shall a man take delight for to know the woord, but it will cause him for to seeke to know it? that which is a mans iewell, he will sometimes looke vpon it: but there are a number of you which are in deede verie Atheists, and set not a straw by the knowledge of Gods will: for let a man tel you of any dutie which ye should be taught out of the holy Scriptures, by and by this is your answere, those things are not for vs to meddle withall: it is not for vs to talke of such pointes. But we are gone a great way from the beginning of this matter, which is, that where ye did affirme that yee loue God with all your heart, and that yee haue none other Gods besides him: nowe the conclusion is proued, that ye loue him as much as an old shoe, and that indeede yee make the world your God, because yee seeke most after that.

Ath.

Ath. Ye do not vse me well in saying that I loue God no better then an old shoe, I would yee should knowe I loue him as well as the best of you all, though in deede I can not say so much.

Zelot. Be not angrie man, for it is but a small fault, for a great sort more do beare you companie, ye go not alone. But because ye make so great boast, I pray ye tell me this, ye haue seruants, haue ye not?

Ath. I haue a poore houshold.

Zelot. What doe you require of your seruant?

Ath. To obey my wil, and do that which I commaund him.

Zelot. What if he care not so much, as to know your wil, but will say: I will not meddle with so high matters, nothing regarding to know your pleasure: wil you say he loueth you, or he is a good seruant?

Ath. I cannot say that he is a good seruant, for if he were he would not take scorne but be glad to beare my will.

Zelot. Ye say right, but why do ye not consider, that when God hath set downe his will & you care not for to know it, that ye loue him as well and do him as good seruice, as such a seruant should do vnto you.

Ath. God helpe, if this which you say be true.

Zelot. It is most true, not only that mē make

the world their God, becauſe they ſeeke more after it then they do after Gods kingdome, but alſo S. Paule calleth the Diuell the God of this world, as alſo in another place he ſaith; there be ſome whoſe God is their bellie.

Ath. God forbid that any man ſhould take the diuell to be God, or do him ſuch honour.

Zel. They are no ſmal number which make him their God.

Ath. You may ſay ſo, but I could neuer come into that mans company yet, which wold not vtterly defie him.

Zelot. If I ſhould profeſſe great kindneſſe vnto you now, and in the meane time draw my dagger and breake your pate, would ye beleeue I were your friend?

Ath. I pray God kéepe me frō ſuch frends, which giue good words, and do euill dædes: I had rather they told me their hatred.

Zelot. Then ye aunſwer, that we muſt not looke what men ſay, but what they do?

Ath. They had better not ſpeake wel, then ſpeake well and do euill.

Zelot. Likewiſe I anſwer you, that we muſt not looke to mens wordes, when they defie the diuell, but to their deedes. by which they obey him and do his wil: for when they defie him in their words, they honour him for God in their workes.

Ath. If there be any ſuch, I pray God amēd them, for that is the worſt which I wiſh them.

Zelot.

Zel. I could like your prayer well, if it were not for a fashion, as ye vse many such like. For when it commeth to the triall, you wil easily be found among the number of such.

Ath. If ye thinke me to be such an one, ye iudge worse then euer any man did: I thanke God I can bring manie to testifie that I am an honest man and alwayes haue bene, I will be found as good as your selfe, though ye finde so great fault with other, as though ye were not like other men.

Zelot. I iudge nothing but that which is easie to see, in you and in a number more, and which I can and will proue to your face.

Ath. Yee are a stranger vnto me, will yee iudge of me, & know not what my workes are?

Zelot. He which cannot spie you, hath but a simple vnderstanding: I pray ye tell me, such as do the workes and will of the Diuell, are they not of the Diuell? S. Iohn 1. Epist. 3. saith, He that committeth euill is of the Deuill. Likewise our Sauiour Christ telleth the obstinate Iewes, Iohn. 8. which boasted themselues to be the children of Abraham, and the children of God, that they were of their father the Diuell: and why? because they did his wil. Euen so you that take part with such as are euill & wicked, shall I aske you a litle question?

Ath. Yea, aske what ye will, & iudge what ye like best: but I will answer as well as I can.

Zelot. Do ye not thinke that all whoremaisters, drunkards, dicers, railers, swearers, and such like, are the Diuels armie, as on the other side, such as professe Gods word and liue godly, are his soldiers, and do fight vnder his banner?

Ath. **They are wel holpen vp which serue such a maister.**

Zelot. Why are yee so vnwise then as to serue him? for all those which take part with those wicked men, and raile vpon those which are godly, do fight vnder the same standard, & seeke to vphold the kingdome of the Diuell, labouring for to ouerthrow the Gospell, and to banish Gods word.

Ath. **They are worthie to haue their eares cut from their head, which raile vppon honest men, or seeke to slaunder them.**

Zelot. This is a cõmon thing among all the packe of you, if there be any man which hath a care to know God, and seeketh after his word, and wil not commit those beastly sinnes which ouerflow in all places, then you which cannot abide to haue Gods word set foorth, deuise a number of lies and slaunders against them, calling them Puritanes, rascals, & many such like. On the contrarie part, let a man be a common drunkard, a dicer, an ignorant beast which hath no knowledge of God, a wretched worlding, or anie kind of such person: he is an honest man: for they be those whom you would haue a man loose his eares for: he is now counted the honestest

neſteſt man which liueth as the moſt do.

Ath. There be a number go ſo farre they cannot tell what they may do: they will not do as their honeſt neighbours do, they will be wiſer then their betters: what ſhould they meddle with Gods word, it maketh them buſie in checking euery man. It was neuer merrie ſince men vnlearned haue medled with the Scriptures.

Zelot. I maruell how farre you wold go, if a man ſhould follow you, ye are like a puddle, which the more a man ſtirreth it, the more filthie mud ariſeth: ye are like a ſinke, where the more a man ſtirreth, the more is the ſtinke.

Ath. What meane ye by that?

Zelot. I meane that your hart is ful of foule ſtinking and rotten matter, which floweth out at your mouth. I confeſſe that thoſe men be not to be allowed, which meddle with that which they ſhould not: but I know whō you meane, when ye ſay they go ſo far, that they know not what they may do: ye ſpeake of them which ſeeke to know God, whom ye thinke to be half mad.

Ath. There be ſome of them which are not booke-learned, what ſhould they do otherwiſe then their fathers before them: I knew ſome of their fathers, honeſt men, and neuer troubled themſelues that way.

Zelot. I did know your mind well enough: for all your ſpite is againſt thoſe which learne

Zelot. Do ye not thinke that all whoremaisters, drunkards, dicers, railers, swearers, and such like, are the Diuels armie, as on the other side, such as professe Gods word and liue godly, are his soldiers, and do fight vnder his banner?

Ath. **They are wel holpen vp which serue such a maister.**

Zelot. Why are yee so vnwise then as to serue him? for all those which take part with those wicked men, and raile vpon those which are godly, do fight vnder the same standard, & seeke to vphold the kingdome of the Diuell, labouring for to ouerthrow the Gospell, and to banish Gods word.

Ath. **They are worthie to haue their eares cut from their head, which raile vppon honest men, or seeke to slaunder them.**

Zelot. This is a cõmon thing among all the packe of you, if there be any man which hath a care to know God, and seeketh after his word, and wil not commit those beastly sinnes which ouerflow in all places, then you which cannot abide to haue Gods word set foorth, deuise a number of lies and slaunders against them, calling them Puritanes, rascals, & many such like. On the contrarie part, let a man be a common drunkard, a dicer, an ignorant beast which hath no knowledge of God, a wretched worlding, or anie kind of such person: he is an honest man: for they be those whom you would haue a man loose his eares for: he is now counted the honestest

neſteſt man which liueth as the moſt do.

Ath. There be a number go ſo farre they cannot tell what they may do: they will not do as their honeſt neighbours do, they will be wiſer then their betters: what ſhould they meddle with Gods word, it maketh them buſie in checking euery man. It was neuer merrie ſince men vnlearned haue medled with the Scriptures.

Zelot. I maruell how farre you wold go, if a man ſhould follow you, ye are like a puddle, which the more a man ſtirreth it, the more filthie mud ariſeth: ye are like a ſinke, where the more a man ſtirreth, the more is the ſtinke.

Ath. What meane ye by that?

Zelot. I meane that your hart is ful of foule ſtinking and rotten matter, which floweth out at your mouth. I confeſſe that thoſe men be not to be allowed, which meddle with that which they ſhould not: but I know whō you meane, when ye ſay they go ſo far, that they know not what they may do: ye ſpeake of them which ſeeke to know God, whom ye thinke to be half mad.

Ath. There be ſome of them which are not booke-learned, what ſhould they do otherwiſe then their fathers before them: I knew ſome of their fathers, honeſt men, and neuer troubled themſelues that way.

Zelot. I did know your mind well enough: for all your ſpite is againſt thoſe which learne

out of Gods word to know their duty towards the Lord: and because, as Saint Peter saith, 1. Pet. 4. they do not run with ye to the faire excesse of riot, ye thinke it strange, and blaspheme. Againe, ye cannot abide to be admonished, when ye commit any naughty thing: ye know not that God hath appointed his word for all sorts of men to be instructed in it throughly, for the holy Apostles exhort euery where vnto great knowledge in the word. Againe, ye know not that which the Lord commandeth in sundrie places, that we should admonish and reproue one another, if any do amisse: & not as you blind obstinate men, which when a man doth after a godly maner admonish ye, he is by and by a busie medler, what hath he to do, he shall not answer for you. And because ye may not do what leudnesse ye list vncontrolled, ye say it was neuer merry since euerie man might reade the Scriptures. It is maruellous that men should so become beasts, without all vnderstanding.

Ath. It would not grieue me to be reproued by those which are learned, but now euery Iacke will be medling.

Zelot. If you be reproued iustly by Gods word, then is it God which doth reproue, ye are not to looke vpon the man: but when ye call them Iackes, and giue them other reproches, it is because ye are blind, and can discerne nothing but that which is of this world: for

ye could see how great glorie the poorest true Christian is called vnto, to be the child of God, ye would not reuile those whom God honoureth.

Ath. **They will be medling in small matters if it were for great faultes it were somewhat, but a man may not be merrie now.**

Zelot. Being vtterly blinde, and voide of grace, ye count those sinnes which are foule and grosse for to be small: swearing, rayling, talking in your filthie ribaldrie, singing foule and beastly songs, these and such like are your pettie faults: this is your mirth, which must not be hindred: for it is death to you to haue anie godlinesse spoken of, if it be, ye cannot be merrie. This dunghill-mirth is that which men complaine of to be molested, and say it was happie in old time, when men were not reproued for such things, now there be so manie scripture men, that a man cannot tell what to say or what to do.

Ath. **There are none of ye all as holy as ye would seeme for to be, but haue faults, ye see not your owne, but other mens.**

Zelot. He which doth not repent and correct his owne vicious nature, and striue to obey God, is no good reprouer of others: but when ye say, men seeme to be holie, and giue it as a matter of reproch, therein ye go almost beyond the diuell himselfe: for you see that I gainesay ye, or else ye would not

inure it, but ye would euen poure out your ſtinking and rotten poyſon like blaſphemous and venimous beaſts: ye would ſpeake after this maner, you that are ſo full of the ſpirit, you that are Saints, and ſuch like. What are you diuels, are ye of the fleſh? no doubt ye are, vntill God conuert ye. But we may ſee how diuelliſhly men are become wicked: when a man cannot make any appearance to be godly and holy, but it is reproched, as though it were a ſhamefull thing to be led by the Spirit. For otherwiſe why do they ſo obiect an honeſt thing to liue after the fleſh, a ſhamefull matter to be guided by the Spirite?

Ath. God helpe vs if none be good but ſuch, I hope honeſt and quiet men ſhall be ſaued as well as they, although they cannot talke ſo well, nor run not to heare ſermons.

Zelot. Nay, you would haue others in better caſe then they, for you iudge them that are zealous in the Goſpell, and would faineſt of all other pleaſe God, to be the worſt men, & the more carefull a man is to be holy to the Lord, the more he is diſdained and miſliked. Which doth euidently ſhew, that ſuch as you are led by the ſpirit of the diuell. Ye leade me ſo from one matter to another, that we are gone from ſomething which ye vttered. I remember ye ſaid ye put your whole truſt in God.

Ath. I ſaid ſo, and ſo I ſay ſtill: though I haue no learning, yet I truſt I beleeue as wel

as

as any Scripture man of them all.

Zelot. Ye bragge very boldly, I pray ye tell me this, are ye sure ye shall be saued?

Ath. No, nor you neither, nor the best of ye all, we must commit that to God.

Zolot. What is it that ye put all your whole trust in him for? Is it not this, that God hath promised vnto ye eternall life, and that ye beleeue he will performe his promise?

Ath. That he doth loue me, and giueth me all things.

Zelot. Are ye not sure that he doth loue ye?

Ath. I hope he doth loue me, but I am not sure.

Zelot. Doth not the Scripture say, that whosoeuer doth trust in him shall be saued?

Ath. God saith so indeed, and I beleeue it is so.

Zelot. You know do ye not, that ye put your whole trust and beleefe in him?

Ath. I know I do: and I hope I shall alwayes do.

Zelot. If God cannot lie, when he saith, all that trust in him shall be saued, and you know that you put your whole trust in him, wherefore do you not then know that ye shall be saued?

Ath. That which God saith is true, for he cannot lie: I put my trust in none but in him: I hope to be saued, what would you haue more? I will beleeue neuer a one of them all, when

they say they know they shal be saued: I think they would make themselues Gods.

Zelot. Nay such as you make your selues Gods, when ye ioyne things so cõtrarie together, & can make thẽ agree: fire and water may lodge together in one bed at your inne, and agree well together; for they are no more contrarie then that which you affirme, when ye say, God hath promised that all which beleeue in him shall be saued, you are sure ye beleeue in him, and that ye put all your whole trust in him, and yet ye cannot tell whether ye shall be saued. But I cannot greatly maruell at this, for you know as wel what faith is, as doth a goose.

Ath. I trust I know, and I meane well, God knoweth my meaning howsoeuer you take me.

Zelot. Let me aske ye this question, when a man prayeth, if he do not beleeue that which he saith, doth he well?

Ath. We must beléeue that which we speak when we pray, or else it is nothing worth.

Zelot. When Christ teacheth vs to pray & to call God our Father, ought we not to know that he is our father?

Ath. We ought for to know that which God teacheth vs, and to beléeue the same.

Zelot. Must we not beleeue it without doubting or wauering, as Saint Iames saith, He that doubteth is like vnto a waue of the sea tossed

with the wind, neither let that man thinke that he ſhall receiue any thing.

Ath. We muſt not doubt, for he that doubteth is in a wrong beleefe, we muſt put all our truſt in God.

Zelot. Then when ye call God father, ye beleeue that ſurely which ye ſpeake, then are you ſure that he loueth you, for a father doth loue his child, euen mē which are euill do giue good gifts vnto their children when they aske, becauſe they loue them; much more the heauenly father which is perfectly good, doth loue his children, that is, thoſe which beleeue in him: then I reaſon in this wiſe, he that beleeueth ſurely that God is his father, he is ſure that God loueth him: he that is ſure God loueth him, is ſure of euerlalting life: therfore all thoſe which pray aright, are ſure they ſhall be ſaued.

Ath. I pray God we may call vpon him.

Zelot. Tell me further what ye thinke, was not Abraham ſure he ſhould be ſaued, likewiſe Dauid, Paule and others?

Ath. Euerie man cannot be like thoſe. Can you ſay ye are like vnto Abraham?

Zelot. Doth not the Scripture ſay, that Abraham is the father of the faithfull, and that thoſe are the children of God, which walke in the ſteppes of faithfull Abraham? I confeſſe indeed that euerie one cannot attaine to ſo great a meaſure of faith as thoſe had: but yet we muſt come to the ſame faith.

becauſe we haue the ſame God, the ſame couenant and promiſes, the ſame ſpirit is giuen vnto vs which beleeue. Saint Paule in the 4. chap. to the Epheſians ſaith: There is one God, one faith, one baptiſme. If there be but one, then ours muſt be the ſame that theirs was.

Ath. Yea, but for all that it is preſumption for men to ſay, they know they ſhall be ſaued.

Zelot. I ſee that Popiſh dung doth ſticke ſtil betweene your teeth, when they teach men, that it is preſumption to be out of doubt.

Ath. What tell ye me of the Pope? I care not for him, I would both he & his dung were buried in the dunghill.

Zelot. I know there be many which care not for the Pope, but yet beleeue much of his doctrine: they be thoſe which we call Athieſts, of no religion, but looke whatſoeuer any Prince doth ſet forth, that they will profeſſe.

Ath. I thinke that is good: ought not we to obey our Princes? and would you haue vs to take vpon vs to be wiſer then they and their Counſellers?

Zelot. I did know ye were an Athieſt, ſetting vp men in the place of God, worſe then a Turke.

Ath. Wherefore do ye ſay ſo?

Zelot. Tell me this, are we for to obey men, if they command that which is cõtrary to that which God commandeth?

Ath. I thinke not ſo.

Zelot.

Zelot. Is there any mo then one truth, or one religion, which is the right, & that which God commandeth?

Ath. **There can be but one truth, that is certaine.**

Zelot. Then when one Prince commaundeth one religion, another ariseth afterward and commandeth the contrary: will ye without differēce obey them both? is not this for to denie God? is not this for to be worse then a Turke?

Ath. **I am sure ye will not denie, but that we must obey.**

Zelot. He which doth disobey the Prince, doth disobey God vnto his damnation, where the Prince setteth forth and maintaineth Gods word. But if there be a Prince which maketh lawes against the lawes of God, we must obey God rather then men. But there are many as I said before, which in any Princes dayes will speake thus, If religion should turne (say they) as God forbid it should, but if it do, it is our parts to be obedient. Are not these Athiests, haue they not denied God, when they set men in his place, and looke no higher but what men command? But ye haue drawne me away againe from the matter we were in hand with, where ye said, it is presumption for a man to say, he knoweth he shall be saued: I may aske ye a question, I know ye will answer very boldly.

Ath. I know no cause why I should not answer boldly.

Zel. Ye say true, for blind bayard is the boldest horse in the cart, although hee bee almost drowned in one slow, yet he will not sticke at another, he will through when all the rest will straine curtesie. But let vs come to the matter, whether is it greater presumption for to beleeue that God is true, or for to doubt of the certainty of his promise? & whether doth that man honour God most which giueth credit to his word, or he which doubteth whether he wil performe the same?

Ath. It must nedes be graunted, that hee which beleeueth God of his word doth well, and he that doth not, doth euill.

Zelot. Ye say true, for if a Prince make an offer vnto some man whom he fauoureth, and he should make aunswere, I doubt of it, I scarce beleeue the performance of your promise: would not the Prince thinke himselfe greatly dishonoured, to haue it doubted, whether hee bee a man of his word? If hee should sweare for the performance of his promise, and the party not trust him, hee would neuer put that vp, or beare such an iniury. Then it must needs follow, that when God hath bound himselfe both by promise and by oath, as it is sayd Heb. cap. 6. ver. 17, how great presumptiō is it, not for to beleeue him? it is all one as to thinke God may lie, or that hee may be for-

sworne,

sworne, which is horrible blasphemy.

Ath. I graunt this is true, if God should tel any man that he should be saued, if he did not then beleeue him. But where is that man which can say, God euer told him so? Doth he tell any one man so?

Zel. Yea that he doth, for that which he sendeth vnto all in generall, he sendeth vnto euery one in particular: for is it not all one, if a man be condemned for treason, to haue his pardon sent him being but one man alone, or hauing a great sort mo cõdemned vnto death with him, a generall pardon is sent for them all?

Ath. That is all one, for he hath his part in it.

Zelot. Euen so it is betweene God and vs, we were all condemned, he hath sent a generall pardon to as many as beleeue the same, that whosoeuer trusteth in Christ, hee shall bee saued: God therefore hath told some men, that is, such as beleeue, that they shall be saued, and such as doubt of his promise and his truth, they shall be damned. Therefore it is all one in those which beleeue, as if he had sent a particular message vnto them.

Ath. I neuer heard so much in all my life before.

Zelot. I beleeue so: for S. R. can no great skil in this geare: hee can whip ouer a new payre of cardes nimbly, and tyrle a dye: but hee should be the messenger of the Lord of hostes, euen as the Prophet sayth: his lips should

keepe knowledge, and men ſhould enquire at his mouth, he ſhould open all the counſell of God vnto the people, and not let them runne headlong as they doe vnto deſtruction: he ſhould inſtruct them in all the doctrine of faith and repentance, and ſo guide them in the feare of God.

Ath. **All men cannot do alike, we muſt accept their good will, euery man cannot be a Preacher.**

Zel. Becauſe ye care not for ſeeking after eternall life, ye are content to accept of nothing: and becauſe yee loue your luſts, and hate to be reformed, ye abhorre the vſe of preaching, & as poore a man as yee are, yee would not for xl. ſhillings yee had a Preacher among you.

Ath. **Ye euer take me at the worſt, I allow preaching, it is good now and then, but ſome can keepe no meaſure, nor tell when they haue done. Againe they be ouer hot and ſeuere, and preach damnation to the people. Likewiſe they meddle with ſuch matters as they need not, as Election and Predeſtination, what ſhould ſuch matters be ſpoken of among the people, they make men worſe.**

Zelot. I thinke the Diuell is the cunningeſt ſchoolemaiſter in the world: other ſchoolemaſters cannot bring groſſe heads and dullards to any paſſe, but content themſelues with the finer wits, for to traine them vp in learning: but a man can almoſt light vpō none of his ſcholers,

be

be they neuer such blockheads, but they haue their lesson at their fingers ends.

Ath. I thanke you Sir for your good word: but I neuer learned it of the Diuell, nor neuer was any of his scholers: I trust I haue as litle to do with him as any of you all.

Zelot. Where did yee learne it then, if not of the Diuell?

Ath. I haue heard honest men speake it, and some Preachers preach it.

Zelot. Then I perceiue yee learned it not of the Diuell himselfe, but at the mouth of some of his Vshers.

Ath. Wherefore do ye cal them the Diuels Vshers? they haue skil in the word of God, and ought to know what they say.

Zelot. I call them so because they teach the precepts of the Diuell: and although they haue some knowledge in the word, yet they neuer learned these things which you speake out of the word.

Ath. Did the Diuel teach them because they haue it not in Gods word?

Zelot. It is the doctrine of the Diuell, because it is against Gods word. For God neuer teacheth men those things which are contrary to the doctrine which he hath set downe in his word.

Ath. I thinke yee will hardly proue these things for to be against Gods word.

Zelot. I would you could as easily proue

your selfe to be a good man: for then we should soone agree.

Ath. You are not for to iudge of me, no more then I am for to iudge of you: but there be many now a dayes which will take vpon them for to iudge men: they do not learne that out of Gods word, I am sure.

Zelot. If I see a man drunken, or heare him sweare, lie, raile, and such like, and say, he is a naughty man, do I iudge? shall I account him a good man, when I see he is naught?

Ath. When a man doth see those naughtie vices, hee may boldly say that such men are naught.

Zelot. In like manner when a man heareth one which holdeth euill and abhominable opinions against the truth, he may as boldly say he is naught: because they haue giuen iudgement of themselues, and haue shewed what they are. Nay they be such as you, which take vpon ye for to iudge: for let a man be more carefull then your selues for to serue God, and by and by you will enter into the secrets of his heart, which God only doth know, and ye will not sticke for to pronounce that he is an hypocrite. In the meane time, let a man tell you that yee are wicked, when he doth see your wickednesse, ye aunswere; ye ought not to iudge. But I will come for to proue, that the things which ye speake against preaching, are very diuellish and wicked. Ye sayd thus, I allow preaching,

it

it is good now and then, but some can keepe no measure, nor will neuer haue done.

Ath. I sayd so in deede, I will not denie my word, and I thinke so still. For a man may haue ouer much of any thing, and inough is as good as a feast.

Zelot. A very little is inough for you: if the Preacher doe passe his hower but a little, your buttockes begin for to ake, and ye wish in your hart that the pulpet would fall.

Ath. Ye may guesse twise before ye guesse so right.

Zelot. Nay I can guesse somewhat neare in such a man as ye are: but I pray ye did ye neuer sit at cardes all night?

Ath. Yes that I haue, and thought it but a short night too.

Zelot. The cause why yee thinke an hower so long at a Sermon, and a whole night so short at cardes; is, that yee delight in the one and care not for the other: the carding is ioyned with much sin and seruice of the Diuell, the other is for to bring vs vnto the knowledge and feare of God. Marke now how much by your owne confession yee loue the Diuell more then God: for him do ye loue most, whom yee delight to serue most.

Ath. Can wee not serue God without so much preaching? I see they are neuer the better which run most after sermons, they talke much.

but I would haue them leaue talking and fall to doing, we see no doing, but men are stil euen as euill as before.

Zelot. Can your seruant serue you vnlesse he know your will?

Ath. No that he cannot.

Zelot. No more can you serue God without the knowledge of his will, and as for the rest of your speech, when ye crie out against preaching of Gods word, that it maketh men neuer the better, and ye would haue them leaue talking, and fall to doing: I confesse there be a number which are counterfeit professors, which liue not according to the Gospell, and most commonly they be such, as haue but a little smacke of the Gospell, and yet thinke they know much, because they want the meanes, hauing the word either seldome or loosely preached. But I will confute your vanity another way in this point, tel me, are not these your sayings? where the word is sincerely preached, if any seeke to frame their liues after the same, when they do either by word reproue your euill wayes, or by deede refuse your lewd manners: these men are full of the Spirite, these are precise fellowes, these are holy Saints, these thinke themselues Gods fellowes: these thinke themselues better then all other men?

Ath. We say so in deede, there is good cause why.

Zel. Then I pray yee tell me how these two things

things can hang together, when ye say there is no amendment of life, and yet yee complaine that they be ouer full of the spirit, ouer precise, and such like. May not euery man see, that yee pronounce things directly contrary the one to the other? that there is no amendment, and yet in effect ye say, they amend ouer fast.

Ath. **We do not say that any do amend ouer fast.**

Zelot. When ye say they are ouer holy, and what should men be so curious and full of the spirit, what is this but to say, that they amend ouer fast? Is not this to amend, whē men by due instruction out of Gods word come to repentance of their former vices, and haue a care to keepe themselues from the spots of the rotten flesh and filthy world? Do not you and such as you are after a sort blaspheme, when yee reproch men with the spirit? Is it a shame for a man now a dayes for to haue any thing to doe with the spirite of God? While a man doth walke after the flesh in the lusts of vncleanesse, he is an honest man: but so soone as he is indued with any grace, yee wonder at him as crowes do at an owle, yee are ready to flout and mocke him out of his skinne: and as if the spirite of God were a spirite of dishonour and shame, yee mocke men with him. We may wonder at the long patience of God, which hath thus many yeares suffered himselfe to be dishonoured, his spirite reuiled, his word de-

ſpiſed, and hath not bin reuenged, but no doubt the longer he hath taried, the heauier will the ſtroke be.

Ath. **Men are men, what ſhould they make themſelues more holy then they be?**

Zelot. If ye meane one way ye ſay right, for it is a naughtie vice for men to ſeeme to bee holy when they are not, or to ſeeme to be more holy then they be: but if ye meane another way (as I thinke yee doe) that becauſe men are ſinfull by nature, why ſhould they ſeeke for to be better, then doe yee ſpeake verie wickedly: for God calleth men to repentance, to turne from their euill wayes: God guideth his ſeruants at all times with his Spirite, therefore Saint Paule ſaith Rom. 8: There is no condemnation now to thoſe which are in Chriſt Ieſus, which walke not after the fleſh, but after the ſpirite. And againe in the ſame chapter: As many as are led by the ſpirite of God, are the ſonnes of God. He ſayth, that if we liue after the fleſh, we ſhall die: in other places he doth ſhew, which are the workes of the ſpirite, and which are the workes of the fleſh: and you like blaſphemous wretches allow thoſe which walke after the fleſh, and condemne thoſe which are led by the ſpirite.

Ath. **Are none indued with Gods ſpirite, but ſuch as run to heare preaching?**

Zelot. Whoſoeuer hath the ſpirite of God, cannot but delight in the word of God; which

the ſame ſpirite hath vttered. The Lord ſayth, he which is of God, heareth Gods word. The happie man is he (as we haue in the 1. Pſalme) which hath his delight in the Law of the Lord, and which doth meditate in the ſame day and night. We haue in the Pſalme 112: Bleſſed is the man which feareth the Lord, he hath great delight in his commandements.

Moreouer, the ſpirit of God doth not guide men without the word: and therefore it is ſayd Pſalme 119: Thy word is a lanterne vnto my feete, and a light vnto my pathes. Saint Peter ſayth, 1. Epiſtle 1: He hath begoten vs againe, not of mortall but of immortall ſeede, which he affirmeth to be the word of God that indureth for euer. Likewiſe Saint Iames ſayth chap. 1. Of his owne good will begate he vs by the word of truth. Seeing therefore that the holy Ghoſt doth guide men by the word, it followeth that all thoſe which ſet light by the word, are led, not with the ſpirite of God, but with the ſpirit of the diuell. I might alleage a number of teſtimonies of Scripture to proue that ſuch as you which make ſo ſmall account of the ſacred word of God, as there be a number, yea the greateſt number, which do not ſet ſo much by it as they doe by an olde ſhoe, are deſpiſers of God, worſe then brute beaſtes.

Ath. Cannot men be led by Gods ſpirit, & ſerue God, vnleſſe they know the Scriptures?

God forbid that all those should bee alwy which are not learned: is it not enough for plaine countrie men, plow men, taylours, and such other, for to haue their ten commaundements, the Lords prayer, and the beliefe? I thinke these may suffice vs, what should we meddle further? I know men which are no Scripture men, which serue God as well as the best of them all, will yee condemne such?

Zelot. I sayd before that men can not be lead by Gods spirite, and refuse to know the Scriptures: neither can they truly serue him vntill such time as they know how for to serue him: for God teacheth how he will be serued, and he teacheth onely in his word. His will is that wee shall learne to know him by his word: And therefore he hath appointed the Ministerie of the word to continue for euer in his Church, that by it men may bee built vp in Christ, as ye may reade Ephe. 4. For this cause S. Paule exhorteth Tymothy to be instãt in teaching, in season and out of season: he trauelled himselfe night & day, he maketh a very feruent prayer to God continually for the Colossians, that they might be fulfilled with the knowledge of his will, in all wisdom & spirituall vnderstanding. Col. 1.9. For this cause he exhorteth the Christians to be children in malice, but not to be children in vnderstanding. The holy Ghost doth sharply reproue the Hebrues

we may see, in the latter end of the 5. cha. of that Epistle: because they were yet children to bee taught, when for the time they should haue bin teachers. Againe, there is a notable sentence in the beginning of the second chapter of the Prouerbs, where a man may plainly proue, that none can come to the feare of God, but such as do earnestly endeuor for to know God. The words by these: My sonne, if thou receiue my words, & hide my commandements with thee, to incline thine eares to wisedome, and to bow thy hart to vnderstanding: if thou call for vnderstanding, and vtter thy voyce for knowledge: if thou seeke her as siluer, and digge for her as for hid treasures: then shalt thou vnderstand the feare of the Lord, and find the knowledge of God. If I a man doe not receiue the word and commandements of God vttered by his Ministers, if he do not keepe and lay them vp, if he do not cry and call vpon God for vnderstanding, if he do not incline his eares and bend his hart thereto, if he do not search & dig after her as men do for treasures, he shall not come to the knowledge of the feare of God.

Ath. **All men cannot come to these things which you speake of.**

Zelot. All men which will please God must come thus farre, that they can say with the Prophet Dauid in the 119 Psalme, I haue hidden thy word in my heart, that I might not sinne against thee. Also in the same place when he

hath asked the queſtion: Wherewithall a yong man ſhall clenſe his wayes. he anſwereth, By taking heede thereto according to thy word: where by it is moſt euident, that al thoſe are vnpure in their wayes, and ſin grieuouſly againſt God, which haue not layd vp his word in their harts, nor cleanſed their wayes by the ſame. But let vs come to ſome other of your ſayings, which I am grieued for to heare.

Ath. Ye nede not to be greued, for I doe not hurt you.

Zelot. I can not but be grieued to ſee your groſſe and palpable blindneſſe: and I am the more grieued when I remember, that many which are otherwiſe very wiſe men, vſe much your doltiſh ſayings, and thinke they ſpeake very wiſely. They ſay, what ſhould vnlearned men meddle further then to ſay their ten commandements, the Lords prayer, and the articles of the faith? and you are of the ſame mind.

Ath. I truſt to do as well with theſe, as other with all their learning.

Zelot. Do ye thinke that ye ſhall do well euen becauſe ye can ſay them, although you do not vnderſtand them?

Ath. Nay, if a man ſay them, and doe not vnderſtand them, he is litle the better: I know not why I ſhold not vnderſtand them, ſo long as God hath ginen me my fiue wits: I am no child, nor I am no foole.

Zel. Indeed he that hath one good wit is no foole,

foole, much lesse are you which haue fiue: you must needs know all and more: for I thinke ye meane, that ye are able by reason to vnderstand those things.

Ath. I trust I vnderstand by that reason which God hath giuen me, so much as is sufficient: I can tell when I doe well, and I can tell when I doe euill.

Zel. I perceiue you are a free will man, one of those which thinke by natural vnderstãding to conceiue the misteries of God: & ye do indeed vnderstand so much as is sufficient, not for to saue ye, but as S. Paule saith Rom. 1. to make ye without excuse, and so to condemne ye. You know some sins: and likewise ye can tell some things which are good, but yee can neuer tell any thing which ye haue done that is good.

Ath. I trust God will be more fauourable then you are: and that he will not forget the good deedes which I haue done.

Zel. A very litle box I warrant you will hold all your deeds, if ye haue no moe old deeds then you haue good deedes.

Ath. Are not these good deedes, when a man doth giue to the poore, and is readie to do his neighbour a good turne? when a man doth liue honestly, serue God, and thinke no man any harme?

Zel. Now ye speake of cost: now ye are hit into your right vaine againe, euen where ye wold be, to boast of those things which ye haue not:

for none of all those or such like are good in you, because they do not proceede of faith: for S. Paule saith, Rom 14. ver. 23. Whatsouer is not of faith is sin.

Ath. **How can ye proue that mine are not of faith?**

Zelot. Faith is by hearing, and hearing by the word, Rom. 10. 17. where a man despiseth the word, there can be no faith: because faith is grounded vpon the word and doth not beleeue things contrary vnto the word. Moreouer, they bee not your fiue wits (as you terme them) which can make yee able for to vnderstand the misteries of Gods word: for they cannnot bee vnderstood, as S. Paule teacheth. 1. Corinth. 2. 11. vnlesse God reueale them by his spirit: for euen the wicked which seeme to know them, do not know them aright. But let vs come for to see how well ye do vnderstand the ten commandements: do yee not looke to come to heauen by doing of them?

Ath. **I do them as nigh as God will giue me grace, I trust God will not require more at my hands then I am able for to do: I am as he made me: if he had made me able for to do better I should do more.**

Zelot. Now yee are in a deepe peece of diuinity, ye thinke this is so equall which ye vtter now, that all the Doctors in the world are not able for to controll yee. Ye say, ye do what ye can, more God cannot require at your hands:

you

you meane as if one ſhould make this compariſon: a father can require no more of his child then his ſtrength will ſerue; a Prince can command his ſubiect no impoſſible thing: if a father ſhould whip his child for not doing that which he is not able, it were crueltie; if a Prince ſhould put a ſubiect to death for not doing his commaundement in a matter vnpoſſible, it were tyranny: the father will ſay: My child did his good will, I can aske no more: the Prince will ſay, he hath done that which a man might, and further I cannot require. Likewiſe you thinke God ſhould deale ſtraightly with ye, if he ſhould condemne ye for breaking the Law, which ye are not able to obſerue; & that he cannot looke for more at your hands then he hath made you able to performe.

Ath. I meane ſo indæd, fleſh is fraile, we cannot do all things.

Zelot. I pray ye tell me, do ye thinke anie ſhall go to hell and be damned?

Ath. The Scripture ſaith there ſhall, doth it not?

Zelot. Wherefore do you thinke they ſhall be damned?

Ath. For breaking Gods commandments.

Zelot. Are they able for to keepe them?

Ath. No man is able for to keepe them.

Zelot. Shall they then be damned for euer in hell fire, for breaking thoſe lawes which they were not able to keepe?

Ath. Not if they had done their good will: for then they could not be blamed.

Zelot. How the diuell hath muffled you, to keepe ye from seeing the daunger of eternall damnation which ye are in: haue ye neuer heard that which God saith by Moses, which Saint Paule citeth in the 3. chapter to the Galath. Cursed is euery one which abideth not in all things which are written in the booke of the Law for to do them: by which ye may see that God with his owne mouth doth lay his curse (which is damnation) vpon euerie one, which doth breake neuer so litle of the law.

Ath. God is mercifull, he is not so seuere as you would make him for to be.

Zelot. Do ye not thinke that he is a iust & a true God?

Ath. I must néeds thinke so.

Zelot. Do ye thinke that when he hath vttered his iustice, that he can by his mercie go from it, and so be found vntrue? Nay, there be many of ye which in all things crie, God is mercifull, God is mercifull, which neuer consider with what conditions God hath promised mercie, neither how it may stand with his iustice and truth: ye thinke God offereth mercie without exception.

Ath. If God be not mercifull, we are but in an euill case.

Zelot. He is a most mercifull and gracious God, but yet not vnto any but such as he hath pro-

promiſed mercy. How many thouſands there be which are caried headlong to hell with this errour, which not knowing the iuſtice and truth of God, do bleſſe themſelues, where God hath accurſed thē For theſe things which you haue now vttered, are euen of the principal reaſons which Satan doth ſeduce men withall, and hold them from the truth. They thinke thus, I do what I can, God hath made me able to do no better, God is mercifull: they know not this, that God made vs able in our firſt creation to keepe and obey his will wholly, and that although we can now keepe no part of it, yet he may iuſtly accurſe and condemne vs vnto eternall fire, for tranſgreſſing any part of it. Ye are not as he made you, and therefore you deceiue your ſelfe when you thinke that he requireth no more at your hands, then you are now able for to do. Ye deceiue your ſelfe, when ye thinke that God can be mercifull vnto you, and you liue without repentance.

Ath. **You wold make a man diſpaire, if ye wold put him out of hope in the mercy of God.**

Zelot. I would not bring ye out of hope in the mercie of God, but I would bring ye out of your vaine hope, which is not that which will ſaue ye, but doth harden and blind ye vnto damnation.

Ath. **How can a mans hope and faith in God, harden and blind him vnto damnation? Now a dayes there is nothing among manie**

of you but damnation, damnation. It is well that God hath not giuen you power for to condemne men.

Zelot. If it were a true faith, it must needs saue them, but being a faith which is blind, it blindeth those which haue it, and hardeneth them in their sinnes, and keepeth thē from the seeking after the knowledge of Gods will, and stayeth them from returning home vnto God by true repentance, because it breedeth this in the hearts of men, to thinke and to say; we are well enough, we trust in Gods mercie, we beleeue as well as the best of them all: when as if they were rid out of this notable snare of the Deuill, & brought for to see the wrath of God bent against thē, they would then be glad with feare and trembling to seeke after the Lord in his word, & to be afraid to cōmit those things which might displease him: whereas now a man may crie vntill he rend his throate against their contempt of the Lords word, and against their foule sinnes, before he can moue them at all: & why? because the diuel hath gotten them within this fortresse: God is mercifull, God is mercifull. And for your other foolish words, that there is now nothing but damnatiō, damnation: do ye thinke that men are euer the sooner cast into damnation, because they are told of the great danger thereof?

Ath. I pray ye let me see what good can come thereof.

Zelot.

Zelot. If I ſhould meet you by the way, and perceiue that ye were going into the way where ye ſhould light among theeues which would murther you: which were moſt profitable for you, if I ſhould tell you thus, Ye will bee well, yee will bee well; or to ſhew you that ye be in danger of your life, if ye paſſe that way?

Ath. That were a wicked part, for to let a man go where he ſhould loſe his life, and not for to tell him.

Zelot. Wherefore do ye not ſee then, that thoſe which do ſhew ye the daunger of damnation, do it for your profit, as well as they which teach ye to auoid ſome outward danger. If a mã tell you thus, Go not that way, ye will be robbed, ye will be killed; doth it follow that he will rob or kill ye? becauſe ye ſay, men now vter damnation, and that it is well they haue not power to condemne men. And know this for certaintie, that if God in his word do threaten damnation, and the Preacher do not ſhew it to the people, and teach them how to auoide the ſame, their bloud, ſhall be required at his hand. But let vs come backe againe to the former matter, to ſee how wel ye vnderſtand your ten commandements. I would know this of you, whether it be good for men to know the law, ſeeing it doth nothing but curſe and condemne vs: if there were no law, there could be no ſin. I ſpeake both of the law of nature, & of the law

written, and if there were no sinne, there could be no condemnation: for this cause the law is called the ministerie of death and condemnation, and it is called the letter which killeth 2. Corinth. 3. Seeing it doth worke all this, what profit can it bring for to know it, or why should it be preached?

Ath. I pray ye tell me, you, for I am vnlearned, and you are learned, If it be as you say, I thinke it were good not to preach it: if it do condemne vs.

Zelor. What a shame is it, that a man of your age should haue so litle skill, as not to know to what purpose the Law serueth? It is a token ye vnderstand your ten commandemēts well. I will tell ye, when a man knoweth the law, it doth bring him to see that he is altogether corrupted with sinne. both in body and soule, that he is vnder Gods heauie indignation and curse, and that in himselfe there is no helpe at all, it casteth him into feare and terror of Gods iudgements and so inforceth him to seeke for remedy in Christ, whom before he did not greatly seeke after. For looke how a man which doth not thinke himselfe sicke nor in danger of sickenesse, careth not for a Physition: so he which doth not know his damnable estate by the law, careth not for Christ. This is the cause why Christ saith: The whole neede not the Physition, but the sicke: I came not to call the righteous, but sinners ao repentance.

There-

Therefore to such as haue wounded consciences the Gospell is sweete and comfortable: and Christ in the later end of the eleuenth chapter of S. Mathew, calleth such vnto him, saying: Come vnto me all ye which trauell and be beauie loden, and I will refresh you. But such as haue no feeling of their sinnes, or which are blinded and hardened, ye shall perceiue small ioy or delight in them for to heare the word preached: they had rather be at Beare-baiting.

Ath. Ye say wel, I would I could remember your words.

Zelot. There be manie which will seeme to be desirous for to learne, but a man shall see, they continue euen as careless as before: but I will go on with this matter. The Scripture saith, that a sorowful spirit is a sacrifice to God: and that God doth not despise the humble and contrite hart: but men are afraid to be brought to the knowledge and feeling of their sinnes, for feare, as they say, least they should be driuen into despaire: as though that were a safe protection for them for a time to be in a senceless securitie: and as though they were in the better case, because they make no conscience of their sinnes: whereas indeed those which are pricked and wounded with their sinnes, are in the way to repentance, when the other are farre off.

Ath. I could like your words the better, but that ye wold haue men not to trust to their

faith: is it not good to beléeue well?

Zelot. There is nothing good in men, vnleſſe they beleeue well: & we cannot truſt too much vnto faith: but you do not vnderſtand what faith is. Tell me this: doth faith beleeue according as God ſetteth downe, and ſpeaketh in his word, or doth it beleeue contrarie to that which God vttereth?

Ath. It doth not beléeue contrarie to that which God vttereth.

Zelot. Let vs ſee then, when God ſetteth downe and ſheweth which are the workes of the fleſh, and threatneth damnation vnto all thoſe which walke in them: when God ſetteth downe that the deſpiſers of his word ſhall be condemned: & yet men which are defiled with the filthineſſe of the fleſh, & walke after their corrupt luſts, do boldly bragge, that they beleeue to be ſaued, and ſetting naught by Gods word, ſay they truſt in God: is this faith? God affirmeth one thing, and yet they beleeue the contrarie: but ſee the blindneſſe of men now adayes, when they heare vaine & brutiſh men boaſt of their faith, ye do well ſay they, to haue a good beleefe, when as indeed it is no more but a proud preſumption, wherewith God is highly diſpleaſed, becauſe by it they would make him a lier. When the ſonne of man commeth, ſhal he find faith in earth? If this be faith, he ſhall find great plentie of it euerie where. For the Idolater, the ſwearer, the drunkard, the proud,

proud, the adulterer, are as full of faith as they can be thrust. For euerie one of these doth brag that he hath as good a faith to God, as he which is the most holy of all.

Ath. These may repent, and be saued, or else God forbid.

Zelot. I do not speake what God is able to do in calling, as he doth call some such vnto repentance, but what they haue in thē presently. But I will see a litle further how great skil you haue in the law of God, because ye need so litle preaching. What say ye vnto the secōd cōmandemēt? Is it lawful for a man to worship idols?

Ath. I thanke God, I do not worship any, for that is flatly forbidden.

Ze. What say ye for the making of any image or picture of God, do ye thinke that is amisse?

Ath. For making it is no matter, so that a man haue no confidence in them.

Zelot. How do ye thē vnderstād the words of the commandement, which say, Thou shalt not make to thy selfe any grauen image, &c.

Ath. He meaneth that we should not make any grauen image, to the intent to worship it.

Zelot. That is your owne addition, for there is no such exception expressed, neither can the order of the commaundement beare it; for he doth not say, Thou shalt not make to the intent to worship, but thou shalt neither make nor worship.

Ath. If ye take it so, then why are painters

allowed to make any picture, how is it lawful to haue the image of the Prince in coine?

Zelot. I will shew you your errour, you do not vnderstand that the law was deuided into two Tables, and that in the first Table, which hath foure commandements, there is nothing commanded or forbiddē, but that which respecteth immediatly the worship & honour of God, he medleth not with any ciuill or politike matter: he doth absolutely forbid to make as I may tearme it, any diuine image, any similitude for to represent God, or to be like him: because as the scripture sheweth, there can no likenesse or similitude be made of God: for he is a Spirit of glorie, infinite, incōprehensible, which dwelleth in light, which none can come vnto: and therefore ye may reade in the epistle to he Romaines, how horrible a sin it was to set vp any image or likenesse of God: therfore the pictures of the Trinitie, and such like, are verie abhominable. But to let this passe, what say ye for the worshipping of them? whether is it idolatrie or not, if a man meane to worship God by the image, and not the image it selfe?

Ath. How can that be idolatrie, when a mā doth worship none but God, he knoweth that the image cannot helpe him.

Zelot. Then your meaning is, that vnlesse a man do either worship the verie image it selfe, or else some false God in the image, that it is no idolatrie.

Ath.

Ath. I ſee no reaſon to the contrarie: and I thank God I neuer was ſo ſoliſh as to take a blocke or a ſtone for to be God.

Zelot. Thē ye thinke your ſelf cleare in this commandement: ye were neuer any idolater, ye neuer kneeled or prayed vnto any idoll.

Ath. I haue knéeled before them, & prayed before them, but I neuer toke thē to be God, neither did I pray vnto any, ſaue vnto the Lord God. I truſt God will neuer charge me to be an idolater.

Zelot. All you Athieſts, which haue no knowledge of God, are crammed as full of Popiſh droſſe as ye can hold, ſauing that ye will not abide by it, but go with the lawes of Princes, afraid to looſe the world, becauſe ye haue made the world your God.

Ath. I defy popery aſmuch as the beſt of ye al.

Zelot. Euen as much as ye defie the diuell, whom ye ſerue dayly. For ye vſe Popiſh reaſons to excuſe your falling from God by idolatrie, and wherby a man may eaſily ſee that you are ready vnto it againe if time ſerued.

Ath. I ſée I muſt let ye alone to iudge what ye luſt.

Zelot. Nay ye vſe the very Popiſh reaſons: whereby they would proue when we charge them with the breach of this commaundement, that they do not commit Idolatrie: for ſay they, when the Scripture doth condemne that ſinne, it is meant of ſuch as worſhip

fained Gods, as the heathen men did, or such as do worship the image it selfe, and take it for to be God. But I wil deale with ye by Gods word. What do ye suppose of the children of Israell, when they came to Aaron, to haue him make them gods to go before them, when Moses tarried so long in the mount: did they commit this great sinne of Idolatrie?

Ath. **They did commit idolatrie, and the booke saith, they were destroyed, a great number of them.**

Zelot. What, was their intent to worship any besides the true God?

Ath. **That it was, for they desired Aaron so, to make them Gods?**

Zelot. What thinke ye they tooke Aaron for to be, a man or a God?

Ath. **That is a question in deede: how could they thinke him to be a God?**

Zelot. Did they thinke that Aaron being but a man, had power for to make a God?

Ath. **If they thought so, they were but fools.**

Zelot. And if you thinke they thought so, ye shall proue no great wise man: For which way can a man perswade any, that a man can make a God? or could they become more brutish thē a calfe, for to beleeue that the ear-rings of gold, turned into the similitude of a calfe, were now become God? No my friend, it is verie plaine, that they meant no more but an image of God, and that which should repre-

sent

sent God, and put thē in mind of him, ye must not thinke they were so foolish, although they were verie foolish, as the holy Ghost in one Psal. chargeth thē, that they turned their glory into the similitude of a calfe which eateth hay. This thē is plaine enough, that they meant not for to worship the golden calfe it selfe, but God in the calfe. Let vs see thē did they meane for to worship any other by the calfe, besides the true God?

Ath. It seemeth they did, or else why should they say, Gods, for there is but one God.

Zelot. Now ye are light vpon a verie poore shift: for we may as well say, This is thy God, ô Israell, or make vs a god to go before vs. For the Scripture it self, in the Hebrue tongue, although it teach that there is but one God, yet speaketh of him in the plurall number, & saith Gods, for excellencie or dignities sake, as we see Princes here in the world, when any of them speaketh, he doth not say, I, but we, not my person, but our person. For the phrase of the scripture I might alleage diuerse places, but you can not vnderstand, but in your owne tongue: neuertheless I wil cite one, it is in the Psal. *Elohim Shophetim Hu*, God is the Iudge, but the words are, Gods, he is iudge.

Ath. Can you proue that they meant to worship none but the true God?

Zelot. It is easie to be proued, both by the words of the people themselues, when they say,

these be thy Gods, ô Israell, which brought thee out of the land of Egypt; they meant not to change their God, which brought thē out from Pharao, and led them through the red sea: neither did they thinke that the calf which Aaron had made, was he which deuided the sea, and drowned Pharao with his host, but they tooke it for an image of that God, & not of any fayned God: and also by the words of Aaron, whē he saith, To morow shall be a feast to Iehouah, which name was neuer giuen to any, but to the God of heauen, at the least in those dayes, the God of Israell had that name peculiar vnto him selfe. Then ye may see, they worshipped not the idoll it selfe, but God in the idoll, they meant not to worship any false God, but the God of heauen, which had deliuered them, and yet they did commit foule idolatrie, and fell from God, insomuch that God was exceeding wrath with them. Likewise in Poperie ye fell from God, when ye bowed vnto images.

Ath. **I hope not, because I did not as they did, they put a deuotion in it, I meant no such thing, but to be obedient to a law.**

Zelot. Then your meaning is, that you kept your heart and conscience to God, and went with your body but for fashion?

Ath. **So long as I did kéepe my conscience and heart to God, I trust I did well enough.**

Zelot. Then you thinke God requireth not to be worshipped but with your soule, and that

you may ſerue the diuell with your body. Ye thinke alſo that God doth not require the outward cõfeſſion of the mouth, although it ſhold be with loſſe of life.

Ath. **Ye do not heare me ſay, that we may worſhip the Diuell with our bodies.**

Zelot. You might heare your ſelf ſay ſo, but that ye ſay ye know not what: for herein ye are ignorãt, that the worſhip of images is the worſhip of diuels. But I know there be many trim wiſe heads, which excuſe the matter and cleare themſelues this way, that they make no deuotion of the image, or any other thing in the ſeruice of the Pope, their conſcience is free to God, they ſerue and feare him, what doth it hurt them, although they come outwardly with their bodie vnto the other? what ſhould they indaunger themſelues in ſo ſmall a matter? But will you heare me what I can ſay out of Gods word againſt you, and ſuch fellowes?

Ath. **I will heare you gladly, I am not ſo wilfull, as not to heare.**

Zelot. There were amongſt the Corinthians diuerſe Chriſtians, which were perſwaded that it was a matter indifferent to go to the Idoll temple, and there to ſit at the feaſt with the infidels, which they made in honour of the Idoll, and to eate of the meate which had bene ſlaine in ſacrifice vnto the Idoll. They excuſed the fact in this wiſe, that they had

knowledge, they vnderstood well that the idoll was not God, they went not of anie deuotion at all, as touching the worship & seruice which the heathen men did vse, but for friendship & neighbourhood sake, they would not refuse to eate with such as were their kinsfolkes or acquaintãce. Now although S. Paule doth mildly deale with them, and answereth their reasons in the 8. and 9. chap. yet in the 10. chap. he dealeth very roughly with them, setting before them the terrible example of Gods wrath vpon idolaters, & sheweth plainly, that they were partakers of the table of diuels, & that they drank of the cup of diuels, howsoeuer they thought they kept themselues and their consciences free and vnpolluted. Euen so I conclude, that these worldlings which vse this shift, how litle deuotion soeuer they haue, yet they haue no lesse then the Corinthians had in the idoll feast; therefore when S. Paule affirmeth that they committed idolatrie, it must needs follow that these do much more.

Ath. **Well, if the matter be heard, that it be an offence, I trust God will forgiue vs.**

Zelot. It is your maner, although a sinne be neuer so foule, yet to make small account of it, but like a dogge that is wounded, ye thinke ye can by this meanes licke your selues whole, if ye can but say, I hope God will forgiue vs.

Ath. **If you say true, then all our forefa-**

thers

thers should be condemned, because they did worship images. I doubt not but God was as mercifull vnto them, as hee is vnto men now: I thinke they pleased God better then we do now: let vs not stand so much in our owne light.

Zelot. It is a meruellous thing for to see how the diuell doth dazle mens eyes, and how he doth bewitch them. These things which you vtter, and such like, are euen like a vaile before your eyes, so that ye are not able for to haue any sight into Gods word. How grosse and doltish so euer the matter bee, if yee can say thus, our forefathers did it, will ye condemne them? then all his safe enough. But see how yee are ouerseene, all our forefathers did not fall from God by idolatrie, for euen in the pride of the reigne of Antichrist, there were some stood vp against him, in diuerse countries. There were alwayes some whom God lightned to see the abhominations of the man of sinne, and so to repent and take hold of Christ, and God who is alwayes like himselfe receiued them to mercie. And doubtlesse God is more now displeased with such as do now wilfully kicke and spurne against the truth, and seeke for to quench the glorious light of the Gospell, then hee was with them, from whom the word of God was taken away, and being blind, they were made for to beleeue euerie lie, and therefore now when God offereth

knowledge, they vnderstood well that the idoll was not God, they went not of anie deuotion at all, as touching the worship & seruice which the heathen men did vse, but for friendship & neighbourhood sake, they would not refuse to eate with such as were their kinsfolkes or acquaintãce. Now although S. Paule doth mildly deale with them, and answereth their reasons in the 8. and 9. chap. yet in the 10. chap. he dealeth very roughly with them, setting before them the terrible example of Gods wrath vpon idolaters, & sheweth plainly, that they were partakers of the table of diuels, & that they drank of the cup of diuels, howsoeuer they thought they kept themselues and their consciences free and vnpolluted. Euen so I conclude, that these worldlings which vse this shift, how litle deuotion soeuer they haue, yet they haue no lesse, then the Corinthians had in the idoll feast; therefore when S. Paule affirmeth that they committed idolatrie, it must needs follow that these do much more.

Ath. **Well, if the matter be heard, that it be an offence, I trust God will forgiue vs.**

Zelot. It is your maner, although a sinne be neuer so foule, yet to make small account of it, but like a dogge that is wounded, ye thinke ye can by this meanes licke your selues whole, if ye can but say, I hope God will forgiue vs.

Ath. **If you say true, then all our forefathers**

thers should be condemned, because they did worship images. I doubt not but God was as mercifull vnto them, as hee is vnto men now: I thinke they pleased God better then we do now: let vs not stand so much in our owne light.

Zelot. It is a meruellous thing for to see how the diuell doth dazle mens eyes, and how he doth bewitch them. These things which you vtter, and such like, are euen like a vaile before your eyes, so that ye are not able for to haue any sight into Gods word. How grosse and doltish so euer the matter bee, if yee can say thus, our forefathers did it, will ye condemne them? then all his safe enough. But see how yee are ouerseene, all our forefathers did not fall from God by idolatrie, for euen in the pride of the reigne of Antichrist, there were some stood vp against him, in diuerse countries. There were alwayes some whom God lightned to see the abhominations of the man of sinne, and so to repent and take hold of Christ, and God who is alwayes like himselfe receiued them to mercie. And doubtlesse God is more now displeased with such as do now wilfully kicke and spurne against the truth, and seeke for to quench the glorious light of the Gospell, then hee was with them, from whom the word of God was taken away, and being blind, they were made for to beleeue euerie lie, and therefore now when God offereth

his grace, and ſeeketh by his word to expell that groſſe darkenſſe, it were good for ſuch as you, not to ſtand in your owne light, and obſtinatelie to refuſe the knowledge of God. Our forefathers had that great plague came vpon them which Saint Paule did foretell, 2. Theſ. 2. Namely, that there ſhould bee a falling away, that Antichriſt ſhould deceiue the world, and bring them to damnation: for God (hee ſayth) ſhould ſend them ſtrong deluſion, euen for to beleeue lies, becauſe they receiued not the loue of the trueth, that they might bee ſaued: and now when God offereth his word againe, men doe not ioyfully and thankfully embrace it, and therefore God doth ſend them ſhepheards euen after their hearts deſire: not to feede them (for they cannot) but to fleece them, for that they can skill off: not to be ſalt for to ſeaſon them, but to be euen like doung caſt vppon them for to corrupt them: not to giue them light, ſeeing themſelues are blind. The greateſt number of you are as farre from God, as they were euen in the blindeſt time of Poperie, and that is confeſſed by your owne mouth, when yee ſay, yee would followe our forefathers: For yee meane not thoſe forefathers which did know and worſhippe God aright, but thoſe which were ſeduced, and fell from him by Idolatrie. I am verie loth to queſtion with you any further in the

com-

commandements, ye are so exceeding blind in them. For I know that in our land, let all the people be numbred, and fiue parts of yee do vnderstand so much in the commaundements, Lords prayer, and articles of the faith, that it were a great shame for a godly man to haue a child of ten yeares olde for to know no more.

Ath. How can ye tel that? I thinke ye go beyond your booke, haue ye posed all?

Zelot. I go not so farre beyond my booke, as you thinke I doe. And although I haue not posed all, yet I haue posed so many, that I know what the state of the most is. This I find that in the best and most religious townes generally, the greatest part haue verie little zeale. This I find, that where there is one of these townes which are forward, there be fiue which are not, because they want teaching. This further I know by experience, that those which are the willing ones, and as it were the dayly hearers for a long time, are verie raw when they bee examined. Then iudge you what is in the rest, which are verie seldome taught, or refuse for to bee taught: and if this be not true, let me loose my hand. And yet there be idle bellies, which are not ashamed with open mouth to crie that lesse preaching would serue, and that there is knowledge enough among the people, when the poore people doe not vnder-

ſtand ſo much as the Lords praier: vnleſſe they would hold them ſtill in Poperie, they can be no more ignorant.

Ath. I could like the better, if the preaching might be only vpon the ſabboth day: but now they run in the weeke dayes, & leaue their buſineſſe, and begger themſelues, they go to other townes alſo, which is a pitie that it is ſuffered: it is a great diſorder.

Zelot. He is ſaid to be bleſſed, which hath his delight in the law of the Lord, and which doth meditate therin day and night: I confeſſe that the Sabboth day is the chiefe time to ſeeke for knowledge: but that man which hath ſo litle loue to the word, that he cānot beſtow one hower in a weeke for to heare it, & yet can beſtow diuerſe howers in vaine talking, drinking, and gaming, is but a dul ſcholler vpon the Sabboth day: I warrant ye, if a man looke well vnto him, hee ſhall find it hard to iudge whether he or the ſeat he ſate on, caried away moſt: and for leauing their buſineſſe ſo far as they may conueniently, would ye haue them forget the precept of our ſauiour Chriſt; firſt ſeeke the kingdom of God, & his righteouſneſſe, & then all theſe things ſhall be caſt vpō you. The ſoule with you is leſſe to be cared for, then the body: ye prefer this life before eternall life: and as for this, that men come for to bee beggers by following ſermons, that they ſell their kine, and that they are faine to bee gathered for in the

Church,

Church, ye haue a boudget full of these lies, and yee neede but euen a mill for to grinde them. They are taught by the word preached, to follow their labors painfully, and the blessing of God is vpon mens labors, which do seeke him and the knowledge of his word: and although it sometime doth hinder them one hower, yet it saueth them and gaineth them many howers, which they were wont to bestow vainely.

Ath. I do not like this so euill as the other, when they runne from towne to towne so disorderly.

Zelot. I pray ye tell me, if there were a dearth of corne, how far would ye go to fetch corne, rather then starue? I beleeue, as farre as the sons of Iacob, when they went out of the land of Chanaan into Egypt.

Ath. I count him a fole, which will not go a great way of to buy his owne, rather then starue.

Zel. He is a starke foole, which will not go a great way rather then starue his body: but he is a foole which will not once step out at his dore for to seeke the euerlasting foode of his soule.

Ath. Those are not alike, we must needes seeke for to liue.

Zelot. No, you cannot see them for to be alike: you see well in things of this world, but for heauenlie things yee see nothing: but to come to the matter, it is great pity indeed, that there should bee such disorder, as that men

should run from towne to towne to heare sermons. Our Saiour Christ pitied them when they came into the wildernesse for to heare him, because hee sayth, they were as sheepe without a shepheard: but you and your mates are not grieued with the same pity: yee are as like a malicious dogge as can be, which lyeth vpon the hay, and will eate none, neither will suffer the Oxe which would. Woe bee vnto ye Scribes & Pharisies, ye Hypocrites, ye shut vp the kingdome of heauen before men, ye entor not in your selues, neither do ye suffer those which would enter. Mat. 23. 14.

Ath. You say they go to seeke foode for their soules, and to learne for to know God, but they do it of vaine glory.

Zelot. There bee alwayes some no doubt, which doe not seeke of a sincere mind but of vaine glorie, and doe abuse their knowledge, and are vainely puffed vp in themselues, with an opinion of those things which are not in them: but will you giue sentence against all, because some are such? Is this a good argument? men giue almes for vaine glory, men come to the Church, and pray of vaine glory: Therefore almes and prayer are to be left: for doubtlesse some do those things for vaine glory, euen as our Sauiour Christ accuseth the Scribes and Pharisies.

Ath. But Christ biddeth vs doe those things. How will ye proue that we are commanded

manded to do this?

Zelot. I know no place which hath in plaine words, goe vnto other countries or townes for to heare preaching, and why? because the will of God is, that they should haue preachers come home vnto thē, and be appointed euer them for to feede them. I might alleadge examples of good men which sought after Christ, whom hee did not forbid. Doe yee thinke when the Lord commaundeth vs to seeke him so earnestly, and that in the misterie of his Gospell, that a few miles ought for to stop vs? How farre thinke ye do men run for a litle earthly substance? How farre do they runne on heapes, both men and women, vnto feasts, may games, dauncings, playes, bearebaitings, and other such vanities?

Ath. Youth will bee doing, yee must not blame them, they haue time enough to be holy hereafter. I haue had as great delight my selfe ere now in those things as one, but now I ware old.

Zelot. I was sure yee would allow this kind of running from towne to towne, this is no disorder at all: how many are there of yee, which crie out with open mouth, against such as seeke after the word, and seeke for to trouble and punish them for so doing, which once open your mouth against these foule abuses? Whereas ye say, youth will be doing, yee say true, and so will many aged likewise, but

doth it follow therefore that they must be suffered to do the things which are euill? In that yee say, they haue time enough to bee holy hereafter, therein yee shew your selfe to bee a right worldling, a very Epicure, an ignorant man: for thus your worldly Epicures do speake, youth will haue their race, let them alone, what should young men and maydes doe with the Scriptures? cleane contrary vnto that which God speaketh by his Prophet: Wherewithall shall a young man cleanse his way? euen by taking heede thereto according to thy word. Likewise by Salomon in the booke of Ecclesiastes chapter 11: Remember thy creator in the dayes of thy youth. But now a dayes it is a principall point of Diuinitie, that youth may walke after the lustes of the flesh, so long vntill through custome of sinning, they are so besotted & hardened in their wicked lustes, and their concupiscences are growne so strong, that there can no grace enter into them; & so it seemed for to be with you, for I dare warrant, you are able to tel a long tale of your youth trickes.

Ath. Well, I am as I am, you cannot make me better, and I trust ye shall make me no worse. Ye speake as though none could bee good but Scripture men.

Zel. None can be good but such as feare God, such as seeke for to obey him: None feare God, which set light by his ordinances, & cast them behind their backes: None can obey God, but such

such as do seeke for to know and follow those precepts which he vttereth in his word. None are godly, but such as are cleansed, and guide their wayes by the word. He which is of God heareth Gods word.

Ath. If they be so good and godly, how commeth it to passe then, that there is so much debate among them? for I know townes my selfe, which are euen deuided one part against another, since they had a preacher, which were not so before. This they gaine, that whereas before they louen together, now there is dissention sowne among them.

Zelot. Now ye discharge your greatest ordinance: I trow ye haue now paid it home: It is hard if Satã cannot with this engine ouerthrow and beate downe preaching. But I pray you tell me, can ye put fire and water together but they will rumble? Will ye haue light and darkneſſe for to agree as companions together?

Ath. What is this to the matter?

Zel. Would yee haue God and the diuell agree together? would ye haue the godly and the wicked for to bee at one? this yee must do, yee must looke where the fault is to be layd.

Ath. I thinke the fault must needs be layd vpon the preaching, because they agreed before that came.

Zelot. If their agreement together before had bene good, then no doubt the preaching that should breake it, could not be good: for

one good thing can not destroy another. But the former peace was not in God, but in the flesh: neither was it so great as you would seeme for to set it forth: because that the worldlings are alwayes at strife, & one ready for to eate another throate: but yet their hatred is so exceeding great against the Gospell, that in respect of the mind which they carry towards the professors thereof, they seeme among themselues to be at peace, & one to loue & make much of another.

Earn. Where is the fault then for to be layd?

Zelot. Vpon the wicked, which fret and rage against the word, because it taxeth open and discloseth their filthinesse, and bewrayeth them. For the light (as S. Paule saith) doth manifest all things. They pretend other excuses, as though they hated the professors for some euill conditions: but this is very euident; a blind man may almost discerne it, that so long as a man is voyd of religion, and maketh profession of no more then they, so long, although he be full, and swarme with great vices, yet is an honest man: but let him follow the word, and be careful for to amend, then there is not a lewder fellowe vppon earth, diuerse shoulders shall be raysed, things shall be reckened vp which he did seuen yeares agone: and now they hate him like a dogge: Light is come into the world, & men loue darknesse more then light, because their workes be euill. Will ye charge Christ and his Gospell, because he sayth,

he

he came not send peace, but a sword, to set the father against the sonne? Mat. 10. Or will ye lay the blame vpon those which loue the truth? Will ye blame Saint Paule and his preaching, because there was stir and hurley burley almost wher esoeuer he came? Was he to be blamed, or the wicked infidels, which could not abide to haue their sinnes reproued?

Ath. There bee some places where they haue graue and learned preachers, and yet there is no such contention in their parishes: I like that well.

Zel. You like that well: so doth your maister also.

Ath. What meane you by that? whom do ye call my maister?

Zelot. Euen the diuell, for he is content those preachers should ride vppon his backe, because he is sure they will not spurgall him: they be very gentle riders. Doe ye not thinke, that if they should set foorth Gods word as they ought, and spread the light, that all wicked men (of which their parish are full) would storme and fret against them? the diuell himselfe would fiske about, if they should spurre him but a little. But they can tell a smooth tale in the pulpit, garnished with some mery story, for to make the people merry, or else some old rotten allegorie, or some farre fetched matter out of some great writers, that the people may be at their wits ende, and admire them. A man

would thinke to see the people come out of the Church blowing, that they were fed as full as tickes, when they go home with emptie bellies. This I dare warrant, if it be not so, let me loose both mine eares, that go thorough the parishes of these graue and learned diuines, and except such as runne to fetch their victuals other where, yee shall not find fiue among fiuescore which are able to vnderstand the necessary grounds and principles of religion: and yet the people will say they be excellent deepe men: But I loue not those wels which are so deepe that a man can draw no water out of them.

Ath. I see you like better of young rash heads, and troublesome fellowes, then ye do of graue stayed men: for now a dayes there are a number which take vpon them to preach, which indéed do but prattle: and for my part, I will beléeue none of them: but I will rather giue credit to that which ancient learned men do speake.

Zel. I do vtterly mislike, that any rash head should haue the office of preaching, which is a thing of so great dignitie, as to be the mouth of God vnto the people, to vtter the counsels and misteries of the Lord, and to teach them the way to saluation: and great dishonour to to God and his Gospell it is, if there be manie such, as you say there be: but if they be godly, learned, graue, discreete, and wise, & do faithfully

fully and zealously dispose the manifold misteries of God, thē the matter is not whether they be yong or old: for the doctrine which they do teach and expound, is not their owne, but the doctrine of Christ, the authority is not of them, but of God which hath giuen it. But I know your meaning: you count al those to be ignorant, and to prattle, which do not preach according to your humor, such as do sharply inueigh against your vanities: and those which do not, they be learned & graue men, let vs beleeue them: and so yee looke not what God saith, but what men say: & surely those kind of graue men doe great hurt: I meane such as carrie a great shew of learning in them, and scarce any are the better for it.

Ath. And surely I think they do much good.

Zel. You thinke they do much good: but I know they do very much hurt: the blind & vnlearned Ministers are hurtfull, those which are Popish priestes do hurt. they which follow euill vices, as drunken Ministers, swearers, quarrellers, adulterers, gamesters & such like, do hurt, but yet these which you speake of, do more hurt: I will tell you how, where there is such an one as those aboue named, the people haue no great opinion of them, for they can easily say, alas our Minister is not able nor meete for to teach vs, and so they are willing to heare and to be informed by others: but those which haue one of your profound

Clarkes, the people so much hang vpon him, that they will heare none other: This they say, our preacher is as profound a man as any of them all: if we were out of the way, he would tell vs: if so much teaching were needfull, would not hee teach vs? if such things were euill, would he vse them? and so they conclude, that they care not for learning ought sauing at his mouth. whereas indeed he teacheth them little or nothing, peraduenture he giueth them a cold collation once a moneth, and when a man shall take the proofe of them, he shall find that they are no better then such as haue a dumbe idol to their shepheard.

Ath. Is it not better to haue a sermon now and then, and to haue it a learned sermon: then for to haue many without learning? I thinke one such sermon doth more good then an hundred of those flying sermons.

Eth. I graunt thus much, that the word of God is to be handled with great care, men are not to step forth and to speake rashly, & without sure and vndoubted knowledge of the things which they vtter. Moreouer, there ought to bee such learning and discretion, as shall be sufficient to open and to manifest the power and dignity of the word vnto the consciences of the hearers: he must bee able for to make plaine the sense of the scriptures, and hee must apply it to the hearers which doth preach: for to handle the holy misteries of God vnskil-

fully, is a vice greatly to be condemned, and I thinke such, although they preach neuer so often, shall do but litle good. But I pray you let me know which you count a learned sermon, and which ye call a flying sermon?

Ath. That is a learned sermon, when the Preacher doth lay open the matter learnedly.

Zelot. You meane when hee is able to speake much Latine, and to alleadge all sorts of writers.

Ath. I count those learned fellowes indeed. I will not giue a button for these English Doctors, which can alleage no more but out of Paule and Peter.

Zel. It would be a notable learned sermon then, if the Preacher should speake all Latine.

Ath. Then we which do not understand Latine should be neuer the better.

Zelot. If so litle could pleasure you, then no doubt a whole sermon would edifie yee much: but such vaine men as you, do shew your vanity, when yee looke more after those things which should feede your eares, then for to haue your soules conuerted. Is that to bee vsed which cannot edifie at all, but serueth for a vaine shew, and disturbeth the mind and memory of the diligent hearer? But let this go, and let vs see the other, for alleadging of writers: in this matter yee haue sundrie graue men on your side, which count those sermons learned, which are set foorth with all sorts of authorities,

and those which bring the bare word out of the Bible, they make but verbal Sermõs: But doubtlesse they may shew some grauity in their beard, for there is none in the matter.

Ath. Are they not thereby knowne for to be learned men? euery plow man now a dayes can alleage out of Saint Paule.

Zelot. They are thereby knowne for to be vnskilfull men, and such as are not rightly instructed in the doctrine of S. Paul. They make a great shew of learning & yet want the knowledge of the dignity of Gods word: when as they bring in the sayings of Plato, and Aristotle, as fellowes & companions with the oracles of God, vttered by his Prophets and Apostles, and as though there were greater and deper matter in those, then in the Bible, whereas all the heauenly misteries and counsels of God are vttered, they sticke not to count that vnlearned which is brought from thence: and great learning to bee in the sayings of the other. For this cause they doe also seeke for to garnish their sermons, and as it were for to set them with pearle, when as in effect they doe nothing else, but as if a man should mingle leade with pure gold, and clay with precious oyle. And because yee speake of learning, tell me what yee thinke, whether Saint Augustine or Saint Paule, was the better learned.

Ath. You

Ath. You should aske that question of such as are learned: would you haue me tell ye?

Zelot. Is not he which doth alleage sentences out of Augustine, Ambrose, Hierome, and Cyprian, better learned then they which alleage out of Moses, Esay, Peter, Paule or Iohn?

Ath. I told ye before, that euerie man can alleage out of these, and if I could reade, and had a Bible, I could do it also: but to alleage out of the other, none can do that, but such as are great Clearks.

Zelot. Then it seemeth, that they were better then Paule, and Peter, or Moses, or else why should they be esteemed to be better learned which do cite them?

Ath. If I might shote my bolt, I thinke they were the learneder, because their writings are so profound.

Zelot. I would you did thinke so alone, but indeed the people haue bene so deluded with such as wold make a shew of lerning, that multitudes are of your mind, which bringeth in a vile and shameful abasing of the most holy and sacred Bible. But let me aske ye certaine questions. Do ye not thinke that if the writings of those men were to be read in our tongue, that euery man then could be able to alleage out of them, as they do out of the Bible?

Ath. I thinke they might then be able.

Zelot. Do ye suppose those should by and by be esteemed for to be learned, which do thē

alleage sayings out of them?

Ath. I see no cause why then they should not be counted so.

Zelot. Is he learned in the Bible, which can alleage manie sentences?

Ath. A man may speak much & know little.

Zelot. You might see likewise, that men may alleage sayings out of great Doctors, and yet themselues be great Dawes: for he is learned, whom God doth teach for to vnderstand the heauenly mysteries vttered by the Prophets and Apostles: and in vttering them, doth follow the steps of Paule and the rest. The Doctors had all their true learning out of the Bible: for in it is set forth that wisdome which is aboue all.

Ath. The scriptures are darke and hard, and therefore men now do not vnderstand them as the Doctors did. And for this cause, I haue heard preachers say, they are to be vouthed.

Zelot. Those Preachers might haue bene wiser, then for to maintaine two so grosse opinions: the first, accusing the Scriptures of such darknesse as though they could not be vnderstood, whereas indeed in the principall and most necessarie pointes, the Lord hath spoken so clearely, that verie simple men may be taught for to see the plaine euidence of the word. The other depriueth the Church of the true interpreter of the word, which is the Spirit of God as

as though the Lord did not now giue such gifts as he gaue to those Doctors: which is a Popish opinion also: for so long as God giueth his word to the Church, so long he giueth the interpreter of the same, although not in all ages alike: but whosoeuer is not blind, may easilie see, that in this age there be as great gifts bestowed vpon the Church, as euer were in any since the time of the Apostles.

Ath. Then you are one of those which deface the old Fathers, when ye will not allow them for to be cited in sermons. To what vse then should men reade them?

Zelot. That is a very false accusation: should a man be accused for defacing the honor of the Lord Chancellour, because he would denie him the dignitie and honour of the Prince? Likewise shall a man be said for to iniurie or deface the Doctors, because he will not giue them the dignity which doth belõg vnto God alone? The Preacher is the mouth of God vnto the people, and not the mouth of men: he is not for to vtter doubtfull matter and vncertaine, but such as may bee most euident. He must say and proue euen vnto the conscience of the hearer, thus God speaketh, and thus he meaneth. He cannot say, Augustine saith it, therefore God saith it; Augustine saith it therefore it is vndoubtedly true: for Augustine might and did erre many wayes. But he may say, Saint Paule saith it, therefore God

himselfe saith it, S. Paule saith it, therefore it is vndoubtedly true: for looke what he saith, or any other Apostle, Euangelist or Prophet, God hath set it downe by thē, it is his, & not theirs: they are but the instruments which he vsed for to vtter and penne his will; his Spirit in them ruled the whole in this case, so that they did not nor could not erre: now when the Preacher doth lay open their saying, not he, nor they, but God speaketh: as they were the mouth of God for to set it downe, so is he now againe the mouth of God, for to recite and declare it.

Ath. The word of God is certaine & sure, because God cannot lie, but how shal I know which is the true sence of it? shall I beléeue euerie man which doth interpret the word? shal I not the better beléeue him, if he say it is not my interpretation, but S. Jerome he saith so, S. Augustine he saith so. I promise ye, he shall haue the greater credite with me, for they were other maner of men then he.

Zelot. I cānot but maruell to see how grosse and dull your head is for to learne the truth, & how readily you can bring out such matters as this: ye speake not of your owne head: I wold there were no greater learned men then you blinded in this matter. But let me shew you your grosse errour. Ye say the word is certaine and sure, but the interpretation thereof you make doubtfull: but what are we the better

that

that the word of God is ſure and certaine, vnleſſe it be ſure and certaine vnto vs, which can not be, except the interpretation be ſo? It is as good for you to ſay, the word is doubtfull, as for to ſay the ſence is doubtfull. Now when as ye hang the ſenſe vpon men, can ye denie but that it is ſtill in doubt? This muſt ſtill ariſe in the mind, Thoſe Doctors ſaid ſo, but they might erre, and therefore I am not certaine that this is the ſence. If this ſhall be admitted in the Church, what ſhal become of that πληροφορία, or full certaintie of faith, which the word of God doth require to be in vs? it is grounded vpō the word of God, for it cānot ſtand otherwiſe. Moreouer, faith is ſure what God meaneth, or elſe it is no faith: therfore ſuch as wold hang mens faith vpon the authoritie of men, where they muſt needs ſtill be in doubt, & whē they are at the furtheſt, they come but vnto this, it is verie like for to be true, becauſe ſuch notable men ſpeake it, do not know a right what faith is, for that ye ſay, he ſhall haue the more credit with you, if he ſay, It is not my ſaying, but the ſaying of Auguſtine: therein ye were euen as good ſay, that your faith is built vpō men, & not vpon God: For if you do beleeue, becauſe ſome great learned or godly man telleth ye the matter, this is no true beleefe, for we muſt be fully perſwaded that God himſelfe doth tell vs, or elſe we be neuer the nearer.

Ash. Yow ſhal I know whē God ſpeaketh

or which God speaketh? you come and preach one way, another commeth & he doth preach another way, ye preach one contrarie to another: you say God speaketh, he saith God speaketh, which shall we beleeue? Is not he to be best beleeued, which can shew that those great Doctors are on his side?

Zelot. See what a ground you leane vnto: you know not when God speaketh, nor what God speaketh: and therfore ye will haue some of the old Doctors for to tell: are you sure he telleth you right? if ye be, it is because he sheweth you the word of God, why he telleth ye so, the credite must be giuen vnto the word, and not to the man. But you say ye cannot tell whē one doth alleage the word in the true meaning: how then can ye tell when one alleageth the Doctor in the true meaning? He which will falsifie the word of God in the Bible, he will not sticke for to falsifie the meaning of the Doctor: you may search the Scriptures, to see whether the testimonies alleaged be so: as the men of Berea did when Paule preached, Act. 17.11. you cannot, neither are you commanded for to search the Doctors: and vnlesse ye see the manifest authoritie of Gods word, ye are not bound for to beléeue, but if it be plainly shewed, that God hath spoken, then ye are bound vnder the paine of damnation, for to giue credite vnto it. Christ saith, My sheepe heare my voyce, a straunger they will not heare,

heare, Iohn. 10. Also Saint Iohn saith, Brethren, beleeue not euerie spirit, but trie the spirites, whether they be of God. 1. Iohn. chap. 4. He therefore which saith, I cannot tell when the voyce of Christ is vttered, it is all one as if he should say, I am none of the sheepe of Christ, because (as he sayth) Euerie one of his sheepe do know his voyce. He that saith, I know not which Preacher doth preach truth, and which falshood, hee may euen as well say, I am none of those, to whom the holy Ghost speaketh, and sayth: Trie the spirits, whether they be of God: it is a generall precept giuen vnto all Christians.

Ath. Ye shall neuer make me beléeue that euerie man is for to iudge whether the Preacher speake true or false.

Zelot. I know not what I shall be able for to make you beleeue, but I am sure I can plainly shew what ye ought to beleeue. First, marke this, the word came not from man, neither can a man teach it ye, vnlesse God reueale it by his Spirit: if it were the wisedome of the world, or of the flesh, then the spirit of the world which is in man, and knoweth the secrets of man, could teach it: but because it is the mysterie of God, none can make ye learne it, but the holy Ghost, which searcheth euen the deep things of God, as Saint Paul teacheth. 1. Cor. 2. 10. Saint Iohn in his first Epistle, Chapter 2.

hauing told them that there were euen thē manie Antichriſts, he comforteth them with this: You (ſaith he) haue receiued an annointing frō the holy one, & know all things. Like as therefore none of thoſe can learne, whō God doth not enlighten with his Spirit: ſo on the contrarie part, all thoſe which are taught within by the Spirit, do feele when the doctrine which the ſame Spirit hath taught, is vttered: he knoweth his owne, & he ſealeth it vp in their harts and conſciences, which being inſtructed by him, muſt needes conſent thereto fully. For this cauſe there is great difference betweene ſuch as ſet all vpon the authorities of men, and ſuch as preach, as S. Paule ſaith he did, with the plaine euidence of the Spirit, and of power, 1. Cor. 2. 4. he addeth the reaſon in the next verſe, that their faith ſhould not conſiſt in the wiſedome of men, but in the power of God. If faith may not hang vpon the wiſdome of men, and therfore the intiſing ſpeech which mans wiſdome teacheth, is to be auoyded in ſetting forth the Goſpell, then can it not ſtand vpon the authorities of men.

Ath. **Is it not lawful in any reſpect for to alleage them?**

Zelot. Yes, no doubt there are circumſtances, which may make it ſometime verie needfull: I ſpeake only againſt this, that they are alleaged when as we may alleage the ſame things out of the word it ſelfe. And when they are

alleaged

alleaged, for men to build their faith vpon, or to make men thinke that there can be no certainty in the interpretation of the word, but whereas they are made for to speake: when as indeed the preacher in his sermon must come with such euidence, and make his proofe so plaine and so strong, that it must needes conuince the conscience of the hearer, in such wise that of necessity he shall be forced for to say, vndoubtedly that which this man vttereth, is that which God himselfe speaketh: for so saith the Apost. 1. Cor. 14. 24. If, saith he, all do prophecy, and there come in an infidel, or one vnlearned, he is reproued of all, he is iudged of all, & so the secrets of his hart are made manifest, and falling vpon his face, he will worship God, confessing that God is verily among you. This testimony doth shew that the force of Gods word vttered nakedly is such, that it conuicteth the heart of the infidell, and compelleth him for to confesse that God is with them which speake it. The word of God is described in the Epistle to the Hebrewes chapter 4. 12. after this sort: the word of God (sayth he) is liuely and mighty in operation, sharper then any two edged sword, and entreth in vnto the deuiding asunder of the soule and the spirite, of the iointes and the marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. Men might vnderstand by this, that by whomsoeuer the sword of the spirit be drawne forth, if it be rightly handled, it

hauing told them that there were euen thē manie Antichriſts, he comforteth them with this: You (ſaith he) haue receiued an annointing frō the holy one, & know all things. Like as therefore none of thoſe can learne, whō God doth not enlighten with his Spirit: ſo on the contrarie part, all thoſe which are taught within by the Spirit, do feele when the doctrine which the ſame Spirit hath taught, is vttered: he knoweth his owne, & he ſealeth it vp in their harts and conſciences, which being inſtructed by him, muſt needes conſent thereto fully. For this cauſe there is great difference betweene ſuch as ſet all vpon the authorities of men, and ſuch as preach, as S. Paule ſaith he did, with the plaine euidence of the Spirit, and of power, 1. Cor. 2. 4. he addeth the reaſon in the next verſe, that their faith ſhould not conſiſt in the wiſedome of men, but in the power of God. If faith may not hang vpon the wiſdome of men, and therfore the intiſing ſpeech which mans wiſdome teacheth, is to be auoyded in ſetting forth the Goſpell, then can it not ſtand vpon the authorities of men.

Ath. **Is it not lawful in any reſpect for to alleage them?**

Zelot. Yes, no doubt there are circumſtances, which may make it ſometime verie needfull: I ſpeake only againſt this, that they are alleaged when as we may alleage the ſame things out of the word it ſelfe. And when they are alleaged,

alleaged, for men to build their faith vpon, or to make men thinke that there can be no certainty in the interpretation of the word, but whereas they are made for to ſpeake: when as indeed the preacher in his ſermon muſt come with ſuch euidence, and make his proofe ſo plaine and ſo ſtrong, that it muſt needes conuince the conſcience of the hearer, in ſuch wiſe that of neceſſity he ſhall be forced for to ſay, vndoubtedly that which this man vttereth, is that which God himſelfe ſpeaketh: for ſo ſaith the Apoſt. 1. Cor. 14. 24. If, ſaith he, all do prophecy, and there come in an infidel, or one vnlearned, he is reproued of all, he is iudged of all, & ſo the ſecrets of his hart are made manifeſt, and falling vpon his face, he will worſhip God, confeſſing that God is verily among you. This teſtimony doth ſhew that the force of Gods word vttered nakedly is ſuch, that it conuicteth the heart of the infidell, and compelleth him for to confeſſe that God is with them which ſpeake it. The word of God is deſcribed in the Epiſtle to the Hebrewes chapter 4. 12. after this ſort: the word of God (ſayth he) is liuely and mighty in operation, ſharper then any two edged ſword, and entreth in vnto the deuiding aſunder of the ſoule and the ſpirite, of the iointes and the marrow, and is a diſcerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. Men might vnderſtand by this, that by whomſoeuer the ſword of the ſpirit be drawne forth, if it be rightly handled, it

will pierce through and through, both the bodies and ſoules of the hearers, and will moue euery veine in the hart, euē of the wicked: ſo that he needeth not to grind it or make it ſharpe vpon the grindſtone of Ambroſe or Hierome.

Ath. When you deſtroy learning, if ye take away the writings of the Doctors, for they ſerue to no vſe: if it be as you ſay, why ſhould ſtudents reade them?

Zelot. There is great benefit in the reading of them, for to helpe vs to the true vnderſtanding of the ſcriptures.

Ath. If they helpe ye to vnderſtand the ſcriptures, wherefore do ye not when ye expound the ſcriptures, tell which is theirs? Ye robbe them, and take the glory to your ſelues.

Zelot. Now ye reaſon as buzzardlike as can be, ye may be a Doctour of Dunces for this argument: Doth the Preacher come in his owne name, muſt he tell his owne will, or is he to ſeeke his owne glory, or the glory of any other man? If other haue holpen him to find the knowledge of Gods will, which he muſt vtter, is it therefore become theirs, becauſe they haue ſhewed it vnto him? If he now ſet it forth in the name of the Lord alone, whoſe it is, doth he rob them? For looke whatſoeuer a man findeth in the auncient writers in expounding, he is no further to beleeue them then they proue their expoſition out of the Bible: ſo that it continueth ſtill not theirs, but the Lords: and if we

ſhould

should aſcribe it vnto them, we should rob the Lord, and be theeues for other men. Therefore in this matter, wee muſt follow the precept which the Lord giueth 1. Peter 4. 11. He that ſpeaketh, let him ſpeake as the words of God.

Arb. Is that ſo meant, that it is not allowed to cite any thing out of other bookes beſides the word?

Zelot. I told yee before that it is not ſimply vnlawfull for to cite or alleadge a ſentence out of a Doctor: but the manner and ende of the doing of it is all. I ſay likewiſe that a man may in ſome ſort alleadge a ſaying out of any Heathen or prophane writer: for we haue the example of Saint Paule, Actes. 17. 1. Corinth. 15. Titus. 1. alleadging the ſayings of prophane Poets: but wee muſt ſee to what ende: doth he reaſon thus; The Poet ſayth it, therefore are yee to giue credite vnto it: no man would bee ſo fooliſh as to make their words being Heathen men, to be of ſuch authority: but he ſheweth that euen their owne Doctors conſented with him in thoſe things, and therefore a ſhame, and foule reproch for them to be ignorant of the ſame. When the Papiſtes do charge vs to bee gone from the faith of the olde Fathers, although we are to confute them this way, namely, by ſhewing their treacherie and lying, when we are able to proue by the writings of the auncient Fathers that in the chiefe points they fully a-

gree with vs: yet this is not the way which God hath appointed and sanctified for the conuersion and education of his people: this engine is ouer weake to reare vp the Temple of the Lord: we must take heede we leaue not the mighty word it selfe, and leane vnto a tottering pillar. Saint Paule sheweth the power of the word. 2. Corinth. 10. where he saith although we walke in the flesh, yet we warre not after the flesh: for the weapons of our warfarre are not carnall, but mighty in God for to throw downe holds: which he expoundeth in the verse which followeth, to be the imaginations and euery high thing which is exalted against the knowledge of God, and euery thought, which (he sayth) they leade captiue vnto the obedience of Christ. There is no power nor any authority can do these things, but that which is in the word of God it selfe: which is to be made so euident by the Preacher, that it may bring this thing to passe.

The miserable experience in our time of such as flie from the strong power of the word, and fight with the weapons of men, may teach vs, because it doth manifestly appeare vnto all which haue eyes to see, that they are not strong enough to throw downe holds, and to leade captiue vnto the obedience of Christ the rebellious thoughts and imaginations of mens minds: they cannot shew a man by them conuerted sincerely and throughly from errors and

euill

euill maners, by alleaging the authorities of men. It was not the practise of the ancient and godly fathers in their sermons, for to leaue the testimonies of the mighty word, which is able to rent the stony rocke in peeces, and to cleaue to the authorities of weake men, which were gone before them. But what should a man say? The word is thought to be of no power, vnlesse it be strengthened otherwise.

But let vs leaue this and come backe againe to some of your other matters. I remember yee did lay this as a great accusation against the preachers, that they medled with predestinatiõ.

Ath. I did so, and not without cause, for they do great hurt thereby vnto many, when they teach such things.

Zelot. What hurt can ye shew, which commeth by preaching of predestination?

Ath. If a man be chosen for to be saued, let him do as euill as hee can he shall not be damned: and if a man be appointed before he was borne to be damned, let him do neuer so much good he can not be saued: and therefore when ye teach this doctrine, ye were euen as good tel the people that they may liue as they lust: Let them neuer heare teaching, to what purpose should it serue?

Zelot. How proude and presumptuously bold ignorance doth make a man? It might seeme to be a rare thing that a mortall man, which is but clay and dust, yea a rotten Carion,

shoulde aduance himselfe against God, euen the Lord of infinite wisedome and glory, but that we see it dayly for to be common.

Ath. Do not accuse me for to be proud, I would I were as free from all other faults if it pleased God.

Zelot. If ye were as sicke as ye be proud, a very little meate would giue yee your supper: But I know you do not see your pride.

Ath. I marueil why ye should count me proud, ye see how plaine I go.

Zelot. You thinke that pride is in the coate, when it is in the hart, a man may haue a kings hart in his breast, and yet a beggers coate vpon his backe. There is cause why ye do not go gay, ye are not able: for take the raggeddest begger in the world, and giue her the same wing which the great Ladies haue, and yee shall see her flie the same flight. There is pride against God, and against men, and you are in the deepest of them, euen against God.

Ath. Proue that, because ye condemne me so sore.

Zelot. Ye take your selfe for to be wise, and the Lord vndiscreete & vnwise. For ye charge him with folly, when as yee say this doctrine doth ouerthrow all, and yet he hath expressed it in sundry places of his word. If it be so exceeding hurtfull, then surely Christ was to be blamed, S. Paule, & S. Peter with the rest of the Apostles were very vndiscreete, because they haue set

set it forth. It seemeth that it had bene good for them to haue taken aduise of the deepe heads of the world, which might haue foretold them the daunger which would follow, and haue sayd, Maisters take heede how ye deale with such doctrine, it will turne ye vnto discredit. O foolish wise flesh, this matter is ouer farre beyond thy reach, thou canst neuer come within the smell of it.

Ath. Smell, or smell not, let me heare ye answer the matter.

Zelot. You suppose that your reasons are vnaunswerable, and that causeth ye to be so fresh and ready, but alas man, your halfepenie is no good siluer, ye are in a wrong boxe, I will shew you how childishly ye erre. Forsooth say you, if God hath chosen a man to saluation before he was borne, then let him do as euill as he can, he shall not be damned: and whereas the nature of man is prone and ready to seeke after the liberty of the flesh, this doth open a doore vnto him, and a wide passage vnto all euill, because he needeth not to care what he doth, it is appointed before hand what shal become of him.

This mighty and inuincible reason of yours hath neuer an eye to see with all, and although it seeme for to haue good legges, yet is it but an old Cripple: be not led by it, for ye shall both fall into the ditch. Did yee neuer heare what S. Paule sayth, Ephesians. chapter. 1. 4. these are

his words,as he hath choſen vs in him before the foundations of the world were layd, that we ſhould bee holy and without blame before him through loue. How ſtand theſe two things together, when ye ſay if mē be choſen they may liue as they luſt,and God ſayth by his Apoſtle, that hee hath choſen them for to bee holy and blameleſſe in their conuerſatiō? And this is vndoubtedly true, that thoſe whom God hath predeſtinate to be heires of glory,he hath ſealed thē with the holy ſpirit, as ye may reade in the ſame chap. They are freed from the bondage of ſin by the ſpirit, they walke in the ſpirite, they are led by the ſpirite, they ſhew foorth by the fruits of the ſpirite, that the fleſh with the luſts and concupiſcences thereof is crucified in them, and that they are regenerate and borne againe of the ſpirit, and ſo become new creatures in Chriſt,ſin is abhominable vnto them they hate and loth it no leſſe then deadly poyſon, they pant and breath to be wholly ſet free from the remnants of it: righteouſneſſe is deare and precious vnto them, their ioy and harts delight is in it: they ſigh and grone, becauſe they can not reach vnto the perfection of it. The word of God doth plainly teach, that the elect are thus as I haue ſhewed: and yet men ſay that election taketh away all care of godly life.

Ath. I like not this, that men will ſay, they know God hath choſen them: how can they tell? Can any man tell what God will

do with him? Did God euer tell them, that they are elected?

Zel. How ſhould you like of this, when as ye like of no goodneſſe? How ſhould you which are but a naturall man, iudge of things ſpirituall? You thinke a man cannot tell what God will do with him: becauſe you are blind and ſee not the way, ye ſuppoſe all other are ſo: you are an Infidell, or elſe yee might plainly heare God ſpeake in his word, and tell which ſhall be ſaued, and which are in the way to damnation. Do ye ſuppoſe that it is vncertaine when the ſcripture telleth a man how he ſhall know that he is choſen: if the word of God tell him he is choſen, hath not God himſelfe then told him? Read the firſt chap. of the ſecond Epiſtle of Peter, and there ye ſhall ſe how a man ſhall know certainely that he is elected, and that he ſhal neuer fall. For if a man feele that God teacheth him by his ſpirit, and reneweth him by repentance, he is ſure (becauſe God ſaith ſo) that he is choſen to eternall life: if at any time he feele the grace of God weake in him, then doth hee doubt and ſtagger, but yet his faith getteth the vpper hand. On the other ſide, when a man liueth in ſin, and obeyeth vnrighteouſneſſe, God telleth him plainly that he is in the way to dānation. And therefore all thoſe which do not find in themſelues the ſpirituall birth at the leaſt begun, whereby they may aſſure themſelues that they be choſen, may certainely ſay,

that as yet their ſtate is damnable.

Ath. How can ye ſay their ſtate is damnable, ſo long as they beleeue? Can men do more then beleeue?

Zelot. They do not beleeue: for if they beleeue, then are they ſure that God loueth them, what is it elſe which they beleeue? if they know they be in fauor with God, it is becauſe he choſe them in Chriſt: If they doubt of Gods fauour then do they doubt whether God heareth their prayers, & therefore they ſhall not receiue any thing at the hands of God, as ye may learne in the Epiſtle of Saint Iames. Chapter 1. verſe 6. 7. and although many of the faithfull do doubt & ſtagger oftentimes, yet they are not like the vnfaithfull which continue in the ſame, but they get the vpper hand, they ſtriue by prayer, & by all other meanes which God hath appointed, to ſtrengthen and increaſe their faith, their knowledge, their repentance, and ſo farre to grow in grace, vntill they come to aſſurance that God hath choſen thē. As for the wicked they know of no ſuch faith, that a man may attaine to aſſurance of his election: they labor not about any ſuch matter, but continue ſtill in their blind doubts, ſetting al vpon hazard: and as for their doing what they can, it is nothing, they cannot but ſin, & therfore be damned, howſoeuer they ſeeme for to do good workes, yet before God they are no good workes, becauſe they proceede not of faith, but from the fleſh: they are

not

not graffed into the true vine Christ, and for that cause can bring forth no fruit. Iohn. 15.

Ath. If God had chosen men before the world to be saued, wherefore did Christ die for to saue them? If they should be saued before, his death was more then needed. Wherefore should men be taught, wherefore should they pray? all these are in vaine.

Zelot. You are like vnto a man which doth make strife and debate betweene brethren and friends: you would set prayer and teaching, and the death of Christ, together by the eares with Gods election: but do what yee can, all these will agree well together, they be so vnseparably knit in friendship. God hath chosen men for to be redeemed in his sonne: for the scripture sheweth that we are chosen in Christ. He hath chosen men to bee instructed and called by preaching the word, he hath chosen men for to call vpon him and to worship him, in holinesse and righteousnesse all the dayes of their life.

Ath. Ye speake much of preaching, preaching, as though it were so needfull: Can they make the word of God better then it is? Is there not enough set downe in the Bible for mē to reade, wherefore should they adde more? Cannot men reade that? Is not reading preaching?

Zelot. Now yee seeke new starting holes. There is some Colt so wild, that he wil trouble halfe a dosen light mē of foot for to driue him:

he will in at euery gap, turne at euery lane, and out at euery gate. Euen ſo I can liken the reaſoning with ſuch as you are: ye haue ſo many by ſhifts, ſo many cauils, ſo many turnings, that ten of the beſt learned in this land, ſhall hardly be able to keepe ye in the way. But we muſt not leaue ye thus, but bring ye into the way againe. Preaching is not ſo needfull, they can make the word of God no better then it is: why man they do not preach for to make the word better, but for to make you better: there is enough ſet downe in the Bible, but you vnderſtand little enough of it. Men may reade it, as a great number do which peruert it, and are nothing bettered by it, becauſe they ſeeke not helpe for to vnderſtand it. Reading ſay you is preaching. Truly then I know a man which hath a little daughter that is a trimme Preacher. I perceiue our land is full of Preachers: but yet in deed not ſuch as S. Paule deſcribeth. For the litle girle is not apt to teach, able to inſtruct, to exhort, to cõuince, nor to diuide or cut the word of God aright, nor to open the miſteries of it. If ye leape ouer many of theſe ditches, ye will breake your necke in the end: ye are a very skilful man, whẽ ye take expounding and applying the word of God; for to be adding: for yee aske why they ſhould adde.

Ath. Are not men allowed which are but readers, euen by the learnedſt in the land? Do ye find fault with the Biſhoppes? or are

ye

ye one of those which do not allow of Bishops? for such fellowes there be now a daies.

Zelot. I would ye should know that I am none of those which disallow Bishops: when as the word of God doth set it downe to be a worthie worke: it is a verie reuerend office, & exceedingly they are to be blamed, which do contemne it, or deface it. God hath ordained the office of Bishops in his Church, for to gouerne and feed his people: such as would abolish the ordinance of God, doe resist God, and are enemies vnto the Church of Christ.

Ath. By my faith, I like ye the better for that.

Zelot. I like you neuer the better for your swearing.

Ath. I am not so precise as to make any account of swearing by my faith.

Zelot. I thinke so, for faith is no more account made of, then as a packehorse, all is laid on his backe.

Ath. I pray God we may doe no worse, and then I hope we shall do well enough: are you without sinne? I doubt not but ye will commit as great offence to God as this, or euer the weeke be ended. Pull the beame out of your owne eye: if euery man would loke to himselfe, there should not be so much finding fault one with another.

Zelot. Where learne ye that praier, in the scripture? The Prophet Dauid, Psalme 19.

prayeth to be cleanſed from his ſecret ſinnes, although they be neuer ſo ſmall. Where learned ye to ſpeake after this ſort; no worſe, and that ye hope then to do well enough: is it nothing to breake ſo ſtraite a rule of Chriſt? Do ye not thinke that children dying in their infancie, before they can ſpeake or worke, are damned for leſſe ſinnes? I ſpeake of ſuch as are not of Gods Church when as they haue only originall ſin. You know not from how euill a roote this ſinne doth ſpring: neither do yee know the foulneſſe of ſinne, and therefore ye cannot tell how much God doth abhorre it & condemne it. For this cauſe, being as full of filthy vices and prophane ſinnes as ye can be thruſt, and of ſuch indeed as God doth curſe and hate, becauſe they ſeeme ſmall vnto you ye ſuppoſe ye ſhall do well enough. What if I haue greater in me. or that I ſhall cõmit greater as you ſay before the weeke be ended, doth that excuſe you? I haue many ſecret ſinnes in me, which I do not ſee, becauſe I do not perfectly vnderſtand the law of God: for theſe I do earneſtly intreate the Lord to make them knowne vnto me, by giuing me more perfect vnderſtanding of his will, and alſo to giue me power for to caſt them out. I haue alſo many ſinnes in me which I ſee and know, that cleaue ſo faſt, that I cannot vtterly caſt them foorth: notwithſtanding I hate and abhorre them, I am weary of thē, I fight againſt them, I grone

and

and figh in my heart with ſorrow for them, I feele no ſweetneſſe in them: for they are more bitter then gall vnto my ſoule: I am exceeding glad when I can ſuppreſſe them: I haue profeſſed and vowed a continuall war againſt them, and although I preuaile not ſo far as to be vterly ridde of them, yet I labour by meditation in Gods word, and by hearty prayer, to bring them vnder, that they raigne not ouer me, nor that I may not agree with them; and although I be not able to become perfect, yet with all the might I can, I ſtraine & breath to come as nigh perfectiō as I can: my deſire is good to reach it, and although I find that I come many degrees ſhort, yet I approch nearer and nearer. This is true repentance, this is that which S. Paule ſetteth forth in himſelfe, Rom. 7. Philip. 3. with this I know God is pleaſed, without this there cannot be any ſeruice done to God.

Ath. **I like not when men will ſpie a mote in another mans eye.**

Zelot. Our Sauiour Chriſt doth not forbid to eſpie a mote in another mans eye, for we are commaunded to admoniſh one another, whatſoeuer it be wherein we do amiſſe: but ſuch as you, which cannot abide to be admoniſhed, do euer alleadge that ſaying of Chriſt, as though hee had ſpoken it vnto this ende, that one ſhould not admoniſh another. It is a foule hypocriſie for a man to bee curious in reprouing ſmall faults in other, and make

no conſcience of great and foule vices in him ſelfe. Euerie man ought to looke vnto him ſelfe, and euerie man is bound by the word of God, and charitie, to looke vnto others, and to conuert them from their ſins if they can. To conuert a ſinner from going aſtray, and to ſaue a ſoule form death, as S. Iames ſpeaketh. chap. 5. verſ. 20. and ſo to couer a multitude of ſins, is a bleſſed thing, and ought to moue men with dilligence to vſe charitable admonition.

Ath. **If they would do it in charitie, I would like it: but men haue no loue, they do it becauſe they are preciſe and captious.**

Zelot. Let a man ſe yee commit any foule crime, and reproue ye, your aunſwer is by and by, yee may not iudge: when as the matter is plaine and doth iudge it ſelfe: Now when a man doth admoniſh you, according as God commaundeth, yee are bold with the ſame mouth, which ſay'd, ye ought not to iudge, for to iudge him, affirming that hee doth it of a captious and quarrelling mind: the thing being ſo exceeding good of it ſelfe: who made you able for to ſee into the hart of man, and to find that he doth it not wel? You are thoſe of whom the Prophet ſpeaketh, Wo be vnto thoſe which call good euill, and euill good. If he be a man ſpotted with vices himſelfe, and doth reproue another, not caring for to amend, ye may boldly ſay he doth it of an euill mind: for can he be charitable vnto other men, to ſeeke their con-

uerſion,

uersion, and not to be charitable vnto himself to seeke his owne saluation? Or can he hate vngodlinesse in other, & not hate it in himself?

Ath. Well, the best of vs all may be amended. we haue all infirmities: what would ye haue more then this, at the last to call for mercie? If a man be sorie, and aske God forgiuenes, is he not euen as well as they which are the most precise: the mercie of God must saue all: and what would yee haue a man care for more then to be saued? I pray God I may haue time to repent in the end.

Zelot. Here is good stuffe, here is sound diuinitie: I may well terme this reason euen the Porter of hell, for it openeth euen the widest gate, that a thousand may go in on a rank. This is true, that the best of vs all may be amended, and that we haue all infirmities: but ye do wickedly apply it, for when ye should reason thus, the best may be amended, the most holy are spotted, and therefore as Saint Paule doth teach, they must indeuour for to proceed forward: for the word of God willeth men to striue & contend euen against all vncleannesse, and neuer to cease, but to come as nigh perfection as is possible. But you reason quite contrarie, that because the best are sinners, therefore men are to make small account to amend. Ye should thinke thus, the most godly haue need to sorrow and mourne, and proceede in repentance, therefore how much neede haue

such as are grosse sinners. For our Sauiour Christ doth shew, Iohn 8. that whosoeuer committeth sinne, is the seruant of sinne: Now so long as a man is the seruant of sinne, so long is he not the seruant of God, for no man can serue two so contrarie maisters. S. Iohn saith, he that committeth sin, is of the diuell. Where learned ye this, that a man may continue in his vices all his life, and at the last call for mercy? God commandeth men to repent speedily, and not to put off from day to day: he threatneth exceeding sharply, in the first Chapter of the Prouerbs, that when he hath called and cried vnto men for to returne from their euill waies, and they haue refused, that at the last they shall call and not be heard: he will laugh when their destruction commeth vpon them: they shall seeke him, but not find him. Do you thinke that when God hath called and we refuse, that we shall not call and he refuse?

Ath. The scripture saith, that at what time soeuer a sinner doth repent him of his sin, God will forgiue him.

Zelot. If the scripture speake any thing to the comfort of the sorrowfull hart, the Diuell doth teach the impenitent for to abuse it to their hardening. It is most true, that at what time soeuer a sinner doth repent, his sinnes are all forgiuen, but is it in a mans choise for to repent when he will? can he take a new hart when it doth please him? can he haue the new birth

birth, and a right ſpirite when he will? It is God which doth create a man a new, or maketh him a new creature in Chriſt, when it pleaſeth him. A man needeth not to care for any thing but to be ſaued: but that is not ſo eaſie a matter as men thinke. Striue for to enter in at the ſtraight gate (ſayth Chriſt) for many ſhall ſtriue and ſhall not enter: The way is narrow and the gate is ſtraight which leadeth vnto life, and few there be which find it? and if this be true which you ſay, that a man may liue in ſin all his life, and at the laſt be ſaued euen for vttering a few words: then the way is broad and eaſie, who cannot find it, who almoſt doth not walke in it? But alas, it is a broken ſtaffe which men do leane vnto. God is very mercifull, but not to thoſe which deſpiſe his Goſpell, for vengeance belongeth vnto ſuch: it is vnpoſſible (ſaith the holy Ghoſt Heb. 2.) that ſuch ſhould eſcape. And although ye haue neuer ſo long time to repent, if God doe not worke it in ye, you ſhall die in that blindneſſe and hardneſſe of hart in which ye haue liued. We muſt ſeeke in our life time to be begotten by the word: for the ſcripture ſaith, God doth beget his children by that.

Ash. **Shall not a man hope for to repent at the laſt?**

Zelot. Marke what repentance is, and trie whether ye can repent now, if ye cannot, what moueth ye to thinke that ye ſhall be able then?

Ath. I hope I do repent now, and shall do at the end.

Zelot. Repentance is a returning home vnto God from all euill vices and corrupt desires which are in the flesh and in the heart. To be renued by repentance, cannot be but where a man is renued in knowledge, for that is one part of the image of God which must be restored in vs: Reade in the 4. Chapter to the Ephes. from the 17. verse forward: If a man continue in darkenesse, he doth not repent: He which committeth his foule sinnes still, although it be but in the desire of his heart, hath not repented: He which doth not feele sorrow and griefe, and hath not a broken and contrite heart, and a sorrowfull spirite, hath not repented: hee which doth not eschue euill and doe good, hath not repented. All these are taught by the word, for that is it by which we must cleanse our wayes: and therefore ye may boldly say, that he which learneth not out of Gods word to repent, cannot repent: for although if it were possible he could repent for all other sinnes, yet this one sin, to set light by the instruction of the Gospell, will make still worse then they of Sodome, as our Saviour doth tell vs Mat. 11

Ath. Will you condemne those which call for mercy at their end which neuer repented before?

Zelot. We may not pronounce vppon any one

one man, because God onely seeth what is in man. But yet we may boldly go so farre as the word of God doth leade vs: & by it we may see what God requireth and what God doth condemne. We may see that the common & generall repentance which al professe at their end, is not so much as a shadow of true repentance: repentance cannot be in a man, especially vpon a sudden, but he must needes feele a wonderfull chaunge in himselfe: he must needes be able for to say I haue repented, I know and feele that I am a new man, and therefore because I know most certainely that there is repentance in me, I know most certainely that I shall be saued: for God promiseth saluation vnto euery one which doth repent. In the common repentance men feele no such thing, but are still (as they may be well enough) in doubt of saluation.

Ath. **Shall not all such as call vpon God be heard? surely I dare not but thinke they shall.**

Zel. I am sure because the Lord doth speake it, that whosoeuer doth call vppon him shall be saued: but yet ye must put this in, that then they must pray in faith: as for the prayers of the wicked man which doth not repent, and therefore hath not the true faith, they are no prayers before God, although he crie loude, or call neuer so often: for vnto such the Lord speaketh in the first Chapter of the Prophet

Esay, when ye stretch foorth your hands, I will turne away mine eyes from ye. Also if ye multiply your praier, I will not heare. Likewise the holy Ghost saith by Salomon in the Prouerbes, that the sacrifice of the wicked is an abhomination. And in the same booke it is sayd: He that turneth away his eare from hearing the Law, euen his praier shall be abhominable, & therefore in the latter ende of the fourth Chapter of Ecclesiastes, he aduiseth men when they come into the house of God, to take heed to their feete, and to be readier to heare them to offer the sacrifice of fools: for (saith he) they know not that they do euill. Now ye shal find many mē cry in their miseries, & make great cōfessiō of their vngodly life, but yet without true repentance, as it is manifest: for so soone as they prosper again, ye shal see thē returne to their old bias: if they had truly repented, then shold it euer continue with them: many that liue in malice, so soone as they be dangerously sicke, will be ready to aske forgiuenes, & to forgiue al the world: they know it booteth not to beare malice any longer, but so soon as they be able to craule out of their bed, & to stand vpon their legs, ye shal see their old withered malice (as it seemed) spring a fresh again, which is a strong proofe, that they neuer truly repēted, howsoeuer they thought they did. And euen so is it in al other sins, they seeme vnto me to repent, they aske God forgiuenesse, but yet the hart abideth still the same that it was before

God

God: they haue not put off the sinful body of the flesh: there is no chãge in thẽ before God, howsoeuer they seeme to be changed before men. This counterfeit repentance maketh men bold all their life to despise the holy word of God, which shold instruct and guide them, it causeth thẽ at their end not to feare the wrath of God, nor the vengeance to come: because they thinke God is satisfied with this repentance: and also because they know not their sins, they suppose that they are but ouer the shoes, when as they are drowned in the gulfe of vncleanneſſe ouer head and eares.

Ath. God helpe vs if it be thus: how shall poore men do then?

Zelot. Men must apply themselues all their life to seeke for the knowledge of God, to increase in faith and repentance, that when they come to their end, they may haue a testimony of conscience, that they haue feared God.

Likewise, when ye come to a sicke man and aske how he doth, if he can but say, as it pleaseth God, you answere, that is enough neighbour, hold yee there: If he say I haue offended God, and I pray God haue mercie vppon me, there needeth no more as you thinke. Ye should teach them the Law, that they may see how they haue offended God, yee should shew them the fearefull curse, and horrible vengeance due vnto sinne, that so they may bee stricken with remorse and sorrow:

ye ſhould ſhew them alſo the glad tidings of the Goſpell, and what Chriſt offereth vnto the penitent ſinner: ye ſhould teach them what holines God requireth at their hand, how they may come vnto it, what promiſe they haue made vnto God of it in baptiſme: yee ſhold inſtruct them in all the principall points of the faith: that ſo they may haue the renuing faith which ſhall iuſtifie and ſaue them.

Ath. **What difference can you ſhew betweene thoſe which are taught as you would haue them, and ſuch as haue knowledge? they can no more but repent, call for mercie, and beleeue, and this do they aſwell as the other.**

Zelot. You thinke there is no difference, but there is this difference, that the one part doth beleeue and repent in deed, and the other but in word: as our Sauiour Chriſt Matth. 15 alleadgeth the ſaying of God by his Prophet: This people draw neare me with their mouth, and honour me with their lippes, but their heart is farre from me.

Ath. **That is meant when a man doth ſpeake with his mouth, and meaneth not with his heart, but theſe haue a good meaning in their mind.**

Zelot. It is meant when a man approcheth with his mouth, and hath ſtill a wicked heart, and an euill conſcience, for thoſe do remoue a man ſo farre from God, that no blind intent can make him neare vnto him. God looketh

for great things in the hartes of those which call vpon him.

Ath. I thinke God accepteth the praier of the honest poore man as well as of anie other, and will heare as soone as he will heare the praier of those which know most, and are the best learned.

Zelot. God is no accepter of persons, he heareth the poore as well as the rich, the vnlearned as well as the learned, so that their praiers be made aright: but if ye speake of those honest men which are so called, & yet are void of all knowledge of Gods word, and of religion, it is an easie matter for to proue that their praiers are not good.

Ath. Can ye haue any better praier then the Lords praier, when they pray that, can ye require more?

Zel. There can be no better praier then the Lords praier, and he which praieth that right, must needes be saued. But let me aske you this question, what if a man pray the Lordes praier with his mouth, & regardeth it not in his hart, shall his praier be good?

Ath. His praier cannot be good, he doth but mocke God.

Zelot. Then tell me this, a man praieth thus, hallowed be thy name: in word he seemeth to desire that the name of God may be sanctified and honoured: he goeth his way, and blasphemeth the name of God, or heareth it blas-

phemed & neuer careth, rayleth vpon his word, dishonoureth him, do you not thinke that he made a sweet prayer? In the like maner he saith, Thy will be done in earth as it is in heauen, he goeth away and is so far from desiring to do the wil of God, that he neuer careth for to know it: whereby it is euident that he litle meant with his hart that which he sayd with his tongue.

Moreouer, he would seeme in words to craue of God, that he and others might do the will of God in earth, as the Angels do in heauen: and yet tell him when he breaketh the wil of God, and his answer is, I am not so precise, I am not so curious, I will not be so hol; you are full of the spirite: and then he will euen reproch that which he seemed to pray for. And these are the prayers of those poore honest men, which you thinke God heareth as well as the prayers of any other. I might go thorough all the petitions and find the like. It is exceeding great pitie that men want instruction; for a great multitude do trust to their pratling prayers, when as they do not either vnderstand what they say, or else meane the contrary.

Ath. If a man labour all the weeke truly and honestly, and vpon the Sabboth day come to the Church & make his prayers, shall we say God regardeth not his prayer, because he doth not vnderstand what he prayeth: his intent is good, he doth his good will: he hath a wife and

children to prouide for, he must follow the world, & let preaching go, or else he shall beg: and so long as he doth hurt no man, but dealeth vprightly, I thinke God doth require no more at his hands. Such as haue naught else for to do, let them seeke for knowledge.

Zelot. Ye are like vnto a hedge which is full of briers and pricking thornes, a man cannot lay hold on ye vnlesse he bring his hedging gloues, and his bill: Ye haue many things to shroud your selfe vnder, and to keepe the truth from touching of ye. As the Lord in his word hath set forth the whole armor for a Christian souldier: so likewise Satan doth by suggestion teach men to arme themselues against the Lord. But you must be stript of your armour, at the least ye must be shewed that it is no armour of proofe. Ye say that if a man labour truly and honestly all the weeke: those labour so, which do it not alone for necessity, but because God requireth that men should painefully trauell: and which haue the word of God as a lanterne for to guide their steps: for whatsoeuer a man doth, if it be not in obedience of God in his word, it is sinne. To pray vpon the Sabboth for fashion sake, is very detestable, because we are in continual danger, & in continuall need, and want helpe continually from the Lord, vpon whom our saluation doth dayly depend, we are commaunded to pray continually, or to haue our hearts watching thereunto.

To pray without vnderſtanding, is not praying, but mumming. You ſpeake as though it were a thing which God doth allow, that men ſhould ſeeke more after the world then after God: and ſo make the world their God. And becauſe they haue wife and children to prouide for, therefore they cannot ſeeke to know God: as though we were not commaunded to ſeeke firſt the kingdome of God, that is to ſeeke that chiefly, and more then the world, & then God hath promiſed, that all theſe things ſhall bee caſt vpon vs. How ſhall any man be excuſed when God maketh this promiſe vnto all: as he doth performe it vnto as many as do truſt him. I haue bene yong (ſayth the Prophet) and now am old, yet did I neuer ſee the righteous forſaken, and his ſeede begging their bread. When ye ſay ye muſt follow the world, and let preaching go, ye were euen as good ſay, yee muſt follow the diuell, and let God go. And if an ignorant man could come ſo farre as to deale vprightly, and to hurt no man neither in word nor deed (which notwithſtanding they come nothing neere) yet this would not ſerue the turne: for there is a God who will be knowne & worſhipped in that religiō which he teacheth. Haue ye ſo fleſhly eyes that ye can looke no higher? Do ye thinke God requireth no more but an honeſt & ciuill cōuerſation towards men? God requireth euen of the poore laboring man that he ſhould (if he will be bleſſed) meditate in his

Law,

Law, or his doctrine day and night, Pſalme 1. Likewiſe when he ſaith that the man is bleſſed which feareth the Lord; to the end we might know which that man is, he addeth immediatly, he hath great delight in his commaundements. But the moſt part of your honeſt men now a dayes, delight ſo much in the word of God, and meditate ſo much in it, that they care not a button though they neuer heare it: they loue it and ſet as much by it as they do by an old ſhoe, and are not ſo forward as you do allow, to ſeeke for the knowledge of God, when they haue naught elſe for to do: for you thinke ye graunt a liberall allowance to God.

Ath. **Would ye make me beleeue that God doth require that men ſhould leaue their buſineſſe: when they be poore and haue charge of children, and giue themſelues to reading, and hearing of preachings. Would ye haue him let his children ſterue?**

Zelot. God doth not require that men ſhould leaue their buſineſſe, but as they haue times to ſeeke for the things of the body, ſo alſo are there times for to ſeeke for heauenly things. God hath not made men for this life, but for the world to come. He hath ſet the promiſes of eternall life before them that ſeeke them painfully in his word, men muſt not be as bruite beaſtes, all for the belly.

Ath. **What if there be no preaching where a man dwelleth?**

Zelot. What

Zel. What if there be within three or foure miles?

Ath. Shall he runne three or foure miles after that?

Zelot. Ye goe aboue three or foure miles to the market for to prouide meate for the carion body, but ye would not allow a man vpon that day which is the market day for the foode of the foule to go halfe so farre. You are the children of the world, earth, wormes, those which labor for the meate which perisheth, but will not labour for the meate which indureth for euer, Iohn. 6. Ye loue the world, and the things which are in the world, and therefore as Saint Iohn saith in his first Epistle, the loue of the father is not in you, yee cannot serue God and Mammon.

Ath. Let them runne that will, when I see them agree better together, then I will heare thē: when they cannot agree among thēselues, they are vnwise which hearken vnto them.

Zelot. Ye might be a counseller for your graue wisedome, who is able to answere you in this matter, when yee dash forth so strong an argument grounded vpon so great reason, and infallible principles? but I pray you what would ye haue done if ye had liued in the time of Ieremy the Prophet, and also of other Prophets, when there were the Priests & the rulers in the Tēple, with many which tooke vpō them to be Prophets, and to speake in the name of

the

the Lord, set against a few of Gods messengers? What would ye haue done when Christ preached, and the Pharisies and Priests, and all the learned against him? would ye not haue heard Paule, because he disagreed with the false Apostles? The Scriptures haue foretold that there shall be heresies, sectes, and false teachers in the Church, euen to the worlds end. Your great skill hath taught ye to make so good a choyce of the time when ye will heare, and to take so long a day, for I warrant ye it will not be two weekes before the day of doome. Ye should speake plainly and say: Ye neuer meane for to heare, and that ye would wish all other for to be of the same mind: and then ye should be litle troubled with Gods word. Crie out against the preachers, but let your meaning be against preaching it selfe. The Diuell is a very skilful workmā, he doth not teach his scholers to say, fie vpon Gods word: but to find excuses how to shift themselues from hearing the same.

Ath. **If they would teach men how to beleeue better, then I could be content for to say as you say: But they would driue men into dispaire, and bring them out of beliefe with the feare of damnation.**

Zelot. This wedge hath bene driuen often enough already, neuertheless, because ye are so knottie and crabbed a peece to cleeue, I will giue it one blow more: the matter is hainously taken, that men Preach sharpely in repre-

hending the vices which now raine. They are now sayd to preach nothing but the Law, which indeede cannot conuert a man from vngodlinesse, but of it selfe is the strength of sin: they are sayd to bee murtherers, because they preach but the dead letter which doth kill. No doubt whosoeuer doth preach no more but the Law and so damnatiō, is no minister of Christ. But here lieth all the matter, men wold be flattered and soothed in their sins, they are loth for to heare of any iudgement of God against wickednesse: and as they be like vnto the people of the Iewes when the Prophetes were sent vnto them, corrupt and corrupting themselues, and grudging against the Messengers of God when they threatned vengeance, and willing them not to preach so, but to preach pleasant things: euen so are there now which lay pillowes vnder their elbowes and preach peace, peace, when all is corrupt in their liues, and therefore there can be no peace. He which shall reade the Prophets, shall find the state of the Church then, and ours now, in all these things very like: First, all foule vices ouerflowing, as among vs: Secondly, the people presuming vpon their blind faith, and counterfeit repentance, & hypocriticall prayers, as they do now: Thirdly, the Prophets sent of God exceeding sharply reprouing them, and denouncing the iudgements of God against them: Fourthly, the people repining there at, and thinking them-

themselues hardly dealt withall: desiring to be more tenderly handled, as to heare pleasant things, and to haue them prophecy of wine and strong drinke: Lastly, certaine Preachers fit for the turne, healing vp, and smoothing vp all with sweete words, and telling them all is wel, all is wel. He which doth but lightly reade ouer the Prophetes, and cannot find all these things, is but a simple man. In like manner, he which doth dwell among vs at this day, & perceiueth no such matters, is but a stranger.

Ath. May you that are precise Puritans doe find fault where there is none: you condemne men for euery trifle: whereas ye are but men, and haue your infirmities as well as other, yet ye would make your selues as holy as Angels.

Zelot. I abhorre the error of the Catheristes or Puritans, I confesse that I am loden with corruptions: if that be your meaning, to charge me with that opinion, which is wicked and diuelish. But if ye take the name Puritane for one which hath more care to obey God, then the common sort, and therefore laboureth to keepe himselfe pure and vnspotted of the world (as S. Iames speaketh) then looke to it, that ye be not found among those which reuile not men but God. If ye meane by precise men, those which are so scrupulous, as to make sinne where there is none, as your words do plainly shew, then do I vtterly renounce that name for

to be called preciſe, & I diſallow ſuch fond perſons, whoſoeuer they be. But I know you meane thoſe which walke preciſely as S. Paule willeth, & do take heed to their waies: not condemning men, but admoniſhing them not in triſles, but in waighty matters, although you count them trifles. The cõmandements of God (at the leaſt ſome of them) are but trifles with you. You ſee not, nor conſider how great the Lord God is, & therfore ye dare affirme diuers ſins done againſt him to be but trifling and ſmal, ye meaſure not ſin with a true meaſure, when ye do meaſure it after the rule of a man. Ye do not know wherefore there is eternall death threatned againſt euery ſmall ſin: yee maruell at that, becauſe yee are blind and cannot iudge how great hee is, whoſe will is diſobeyed. Let me ſet it before ye: Doe ye not ſuppoſe that if one of your degree ſhould ſay ſomething againſt ye, that it were a reproch, as for example, call ye knaue, were it not an offence?

Ath. I thinke I may well ſay he doth offend, for he ought not to deale ſo with his neighbor.

Zelot. Then he is worthy ſome rebuke for his euill tongue.

Ath. Yea, and to confeſſe his fault alſo.

Zel. What if he ſhould giue ſuch language to a Iuſtice of peace? or to ſome inferior Magiſtrate? ye will confeſſe the fault is greater: becauſe it is againſt a higher perſon?

Ath. No doubt the fault ſhould be greater,

and he were worthy to sit by the heeles for it.

Zel. What if he should do it to a noble man, as one of the chiefe Counsellors of the Prince, were it not then much greater?

Ath. I must dœdes confesse so: & such a villaine were worthy for to loose his eares.

Zel. What if he should do it vnto a Prince?

Ath. He were worthy then for to loose his life.

Zelot. Do ye not know that God is in an infinite degree aboue Princes? they are but dust before him.

Ath. I know that well enough.

Zel. Wherefore haueye not the reason then for to cōsider, that those sins which seeme to be very small, are exceeding great because they be done against his infinite Maiesty: the ignorāce of this point causeth many men for to make but a light account of diuerse sinnes, and euen to laugh at them: likewise to mocke at those which make conscience of them, counting them ouer precise and nice. Such men do not know the Lord aright in his most high Maiestie: They know not the waightinesse of his law, euen in the least point in it. And it is ouer childish which they obiect against the godly, Haue not you infirmities? are you not men? What would they gather hereby, that because men haue infirmities, therefore they may not reproue such as wilfully and carelesly offend? The rest of your speech is a meere slaunder, a

deuice which the diuell hath found out for to ſhame true godlineſſe. For let a man haue but the tenth part of the zeale which the word of God requireth or neuer ſo little a ſparke of indeuor for to walke vprightly and he ſhall haue it caſt in his teeth, that he thinketh himſelfe halfe a God, and taketh himſelfe to be as holy as an Angell.

Ath. A number do ſo indeede, or elſe they wold not be ſo ready for to checke euery man: and eſteeme ſo well of themſelues.

Zelot. Doth that bone ſticke in your throte ſtill, take heede that it do not choke ye. Ye take it for a ſore checke, when any doth refuſe to take part with you in your wickedneſſe: following the counſell of S. Paule, when he ſaith, haue no fellowſhip with the vnfruitfull works of darkeneſſe, but rather reproue them. Light is come into the world, and men loue darkeneſſe more then light, becauſe their workes be euill. How well they eſteeme of themſelues, you cannot tell: this is moſt certaine, that although a Godly man hath nothing of his owne for to boaſt of, becauſe it is the grace of the Lord which hath put the difference, yet he may well thinke better of himſelfe, then of the wicked, and ſuch as haue no regard to ſerue God but in a few words.

Ath. Do ye thinke that there be none which are ouer precise: which would ſeeme for to be ſo holy, and yet are not?

Zelot. The

Zelot. The diuell is a cunning workeman, when he seeketh for to bring the truth into discredite, he can play on both hands, he can deceiue on euery side. And therefore he hath some vaine and curious braines which are ouer precise in things which are no sin, passing by foule & great sins in thēselues, which is a great vanity, and vnder colour of godly zeale, which they would seeme for to haue, they couer their bitternesse euen of wormewood, and gall: which vncharitably sometimes they cast forth vppon such as are more godly then themselues. But this ought not for to be any discredit vnto such as are zealous and earnest against those things which are vices indeed, although they seeme to be neuer so small: as for example, when one doth sweare as you did, by his faith, or by bread, or fire: tell him of it: what is his answer? ye are ouer precise: I meane no hurt neither to God nor men: I speake earnestly, I do not lie: If it be a sin, it is but a small sin. But see how grosse an excuse this is, he breaketh the commandement of God, and yet he meaneth no hurt: Christ our great teacher doth straightly vrge it, and yet he saith it is but a small sin, a thing not to be regarded. How much dishonor is this to our heauenly Maister, to say that he taught things so small and trifling, that they are not to be regarded?

Ath. Well, it is happy that we shal be saued by faith in Christ, although we be sinfull: he hath shed his bloud for vs: I looke for to be sa-

ned by him, what would ye haue more?

Zel. It is happy indeed for those which haue faith, for they are cleansed from their sins. But such as you seeke no more but to make the death of Christ as an easie score to set all vpon: for ye are like to the man which thinking that he shold haue all of his hostesse for scoring vp, tooke very liberally: ye thinke the reckening is now so easie, that ye may set cocke a hoope, all is paid for. But if I should trie your faith by the word, ye shold see that ye haue litle enough, & therefore your score will faile in the ende, and grow to a greater payment then ye suppose.

Ath. Whatsoeuer you say, ye shall neuer driue me from beléeuing in Christ, nor all the sort of ye.

Zel. I would not for ten thousand worlds be the man which should driue any one from the faith in Christ, I do seeke to bring ye vnto the faith in Christ.

Ath. Ye may keepe such seeking to your self, and let me alone: I beléeue as well as you, take care for your selfe, you shall not answere for me.

Zelot. Now yee are sure I trow, for this night, ye haue stopped my mouth, and giuen me a bone to gnaw vppon. But I pray ye shall not I answere for you in no respect? What if I see ye are blind and ready for to fall into the pit of eternall distruction, and will not put foorth my hand for to succour yee, is it not to bee

layd vnto my charge, that I wanted loue? Therefore I can easily pull your bridle out of my mouth, & be so bold as for to meddle with ye: we will a litle trie, because yee bragge so stoutly, how well ye beleeue. Ye beleeue Christ was crucified, and suffered vpon the Crosse: but are ye able for to proue that ye beleeue in Christ crucified?

Ath. I say I do, are you able for to disproue me?

Zelot. Sinne is not slaine in ye, therefore ye do not.

Ath. How proue ye that sin is not slaine in me?

Zelot. Because it doth raigne in ye, therefore it is aliue.

Ath. I know not what ye meane by that.

Zelot. Ye are led by sinne, ye delight in it, ye haue not mortified the lusts and concupiscences of the same: and therefore ye haue not learned Christ, as Saint Paule speaketh, Ephesians 4. Ye haue not put off the old man, and put on the new man: the death and passion of Christ hath not slaine sinne in you: for to beleeue in Christ crucified, is for to be crucified with him, as the Apostles do teach in sundry places. The reason is this, Christ was not crucified for to slay sin in himselfe (for he had none) but in his members, which are ioyned and knit vnto him by faith, in them the force and power of his death doth shew it selfe: now he which hath

this worke of the death of Christ in him, that he feeleth himself crucified concerning the body of sin, his faith in the passion of Christ is but a dead faith, and cannot saue him. This is the cause why S. Paule saith, Rom. 8. that those which are in Christ, walke not after the flesh, but after the spirit. S. Ion saith, 1. Epistle, chap. 3. Ye know that he was made manifest to take away our sins, & in him was no sin: Whosoeuer abideth in him sinneth not, he that sinneth hath not seene him, nor knowne him.

Ath. Then by that reason, ye would proue that all that beléeue in Christ are perfect without sin: I thinke all are sinners.

Zelot. Whosoeuer is borne of God sinneth not. 1. Iohn 3. 9.

Ath. Is there any man which can say that he is without sinne?

Zel. Not one which liueth in this flesh.

Ath. Then ye are contrary vnto your selfe: for euē now ye sayd: That whosoeuer abideth in Christ sinneth not, and he which is borne of God sinneth not: and now ye confesse that all are sinners so long as they liue.

Zelot. I am not contrary vnto my selfe, but your blindnesse causeth yee for to thinke so. Looke in the Epistle to the Romaines Chap. 7. and there yee shall find how Saint Paule coupleth both these things together in himselfe, which you iudge to be so contrary, that by no meanes they may be found in one man toge-

ther at one time. He confeſſeth that there was a law in his members, rebelling againſt the law of his minde, and leading him captiue to the law of ſinne. And yet a little before in the ſame Chapter hee ſayth, That he did not commit the euill, but ſin which dwelt in him. The reaſon which he maketh is, that he did cõſent vnto the law, & would haue done the good, but he did the euill which he hated. To make the matter plaine, thus it is: S. Paule was regenerate, but yet not in full perfection, for the rẽnant of ſin did abide in him: that which the part regenerate did, or coueted to doe, or conſented vnto, that hee ſaith he did: and that which the corruption which did ſtill remaine in him, forced him for to do, that he ſaith he did not, but ſin which dwelled in him. He doth eſteeme himſelfe in the part regenerate, he counteth the remnants of the old man, to bee but as excrements, or as a dead carion, which did abide in him, & annoy dim. His delight and deſire was vpon the good, he hated the euill, and therfore when he did ſin, becauſe it was againſt his conſent, and againſt his will, it was no obedience which he gaue vnto it: he did not therefore ſerue ſin, neither did ſinne raigne ouer him, but exerciſe a certaine tyranny ouer him, which he could not ſpeake of.

Ath. **I know not what ye meane when ye haue ſayd what ye can, all muſt be ſinners.**

Zelot. **Ye may very eaſily perſwade me to**

beleeue that yee know not what I meane: if your fiue wits were fifteene, they would helpe nothing in this case. Because yee know not what this meaneth, ye know not what faith in Christ crucified meaneth, ye know not what repentance meaneth, ye can see no difference of sinners: all are sinners say you, and the death of Christ is that which saueth, not considering that the death of Christ first killeth those whom it maketh aliue. For this cause men are greatly ouershot oftentimes: when they come vnto a sicke man, they thinke if he say, I beleeue Christ died for my sinnes, and shed his bloud for me, that then all is as well as may be. If it were faith indeed in the bloud of Christ, they must needes be in good case: for all that beleeue in him, shall be saued. But they stay vpon a bare fantasie, which is a dead and weake faith, not making them to feele the power of the death of Christ. Ignorance is so deepely setled in mens minds, that let a man be neuer so wicked, neuer so farre from true knowledge of God, if he can make but some generall confession, they neuer looke further. And because they see almost all (howsoeuer they liue) find this, it maketh them also to be careless, and neuer for to thinke of the new birth, of which Christ speaketh, whē he saith vnto Nicodemus: except a man be borne againe, he cannot see the kingdome of God: This new birth is shut out at the doores, and therefore no doubt God doth

shut

ſhut them out of his kingdome which make no account of it.

Ath. Make your ſelfe neuer ſo ſkilfull, yet ye cannot tell which man God ſaueth, & which he condemneth.

Zel. It is not the will of God, that we ſhold take vpon vs for to pronounce vpon any man, and to ſay he is damned: becauſe we muſt leaue the ſecret counſell of God vnto himſelfe, who is not bound vnto vs, to giue any account of his doings. But I pray ye let vs a litle conſider how this headleſſe bolt of yours is ſhot forth againſt true godlineſſe. Thus you reaſon, no man can tell who are ſaued, and who are damned, therefore we are not for to care for tryall of our faith and repentance: and that therefore the rules which are giuen in the word of God in theſe points are nothing worth. Euery man may ſearch and know in himſelfe, whether he be in good caſe or not: & we ought euery one for to try our ſelues by that which the word teacheth ſo plentifully. I would wiſh ye to conſider what the cauſe is why the greateſt multitude go to deſtruction: euen becauſe they know not theſe things, and therefore ſee not the great daunger which they be in, but can boldly beare thēſelues in hand, that they ſhall do well enough. Many do laugh euen in the middeſt of deſtruction, I meane that they can ſport themſelues euen in doing thoſe things which are their bane: and all becauſe they truſt to this beliefe which

you brag of. For as on the one ſide true faith & true repentance, and conuerſion vnto God, do ſalue all the ſores and ſickneſſes of the ſoule: euen ſo the common dead faith and counterfeit repentance may be called the diuels plaiſter, by which he doth a litle in the top, for a time, ſalue the deepe and deadly wounds, but they rancle within, and bring vtter deſtruction. It is great pitie that the word of God is not layd open in al places, that the people might come to the vnderſtanding of Chriſt and his power, in tranſlating them out of the power of darkneſſe into his kingdom of light: which is wrought with great and diligent teaching, becauſe men are made of a dull metall, and hard to conceiue ſpirituall and heauenly things.

Ath. Well, I muſt leaue ye now: ye haue dealt very hardly with me: it were good that you Puritanes ſhould conſider your ſelues, & become better ſubiects to the Prince.

Zelot. I am like to haue a very good farewell at your hands, for all my trauell in teaching ye. But I looked for no other reward from ye: the black Moore cānot chāge his hew, nor the Cat of the mountaine her ſpots. I muſt ſuffer your reproch, for if they haue called the good man of the houſe Beelzebub, how much more thoſe which be of his houſhold?

Thoſe which conſider not themſelues, are worſe then mad men: I told ye before, that I do not allow that vice. For your ſlaunderous accuſation,

sation, I scorne and defie it: I may boldly take the Lord as a witnesse vnto my conscience, that I do honour and obey the Prince, and that I do condemne, hate, and accurse al disobedience vnto the higher powers. But this hath euer bin the ready way which the diuell hath vsed to bring those which feare God into hatred: by his instruments to charge thē to be enemies vnto Princes. Christ was accused of treason, and condemned as an enemy to Cæsar. Saint Paul diuerse times, was thought to be a man which did trouble the state. And whosoeuer shal reade the ancient stories of the Church, shal find that this continued still from time to time.

Ath. **Are not there many which count themselues very holy, and yet breake the Queenes lawes?**

Zelot. What if it should fall out, as it doth fall out some times, that godly Princes command some thing which is contrary vnto Gods word, should we obey God or men? It is a very grosse thing to thinke, that a man for obeying God doth disobey his Prince. I would know this also, whether the breach of euery particular law, doth make a man by & by an euill subiect to his Prince? if it should, I thinke true subiects might soone be nūbred. Likewise, I wold know this, whether a man which is disobedient vnto God and despiseth his lawes, can for conscience sake be obedient vnto his Prince? Hauing bin found vnfaithfull to God, shall he be iudged

faithfull to men? And where as such as you cry out against those which professe the Gospell, that they breake the Queenes lawes, & are not the Queenes friends, I answer ye thus: I will aduenture all that I haue that let proofe be made, & those which haue this most in their mouths; the Queenes lawes, the Queenes lawes, as though they were altogether made of obedience, shall be found to breake two for their one, who they accuse. If ye did cry out in this matter moued with a good conscience, then would ye be carefull for to keepe the lawes your selues: and if ye haue care of Princes lawes, then would ye haue care of Gods lawes.

Ath. Wherein can ye accuse me?

Zel. I meane not to accuse you, but to speake that which I know by a nũber, they breake her maiesties lawes in their apparell, in their meate, in their words, being blasphemers & raylers, in quarelling & fighting, in dicing & carding, & bowling, & in many such like. And because ye speake oftẽ of this: who are the Queenes frieds? I say none but such as feare God: for the wicked & vngodly do prouoke God vnto anger against the realme, & do procure the destruction of it, God heareth the praiers of such as feare & loue his lawes, whẽ they cry vnto him for their Prince: therfore there can be no more vtter enemies vnto Princes, then such as are wicked against God. Now this is a very preposterous thing, that you which are rebels against God, shold beare men

in

in hand, that ye be the friends of the Prince, & that such as are godly, they must be counted enemies.

Ath. I can say no more but God bless and saue her.

Zelot. Amen. I pray God for his mercy sake graunt that we may be thankfull for those exceeding great blessings which he hath by her heaped vpon vs, both for body and soule, & the Lord giue vs louing & obedient harts towards her. And also I beseech God to keepe her out of the hand of her enemies, to gouerne her with his blessed spirit, that she may exalt and magnifie his glorious Gospell more and more, & repaire the ruines of his Church: and so glorifie him in this world, that in the world to come she may be glorified for euer.

Amen.

FINIS.